

**THE LIFE AND REPERTOIRE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BARTONE,
PETER DAWSON: 1882-1961
an historical and musicological enquiry**

by

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submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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Dept of History

This Thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the Thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

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Abstract

The assumption that Peter Dawson is known as a world-famous recording star, the most famous ballad singer of his era, as the baritone who had recorded more titles and sold more records than any one else during a career which spanned fifty years has almost precluded a comprehensive study of his actual achievements. Through a detailed review of his career from its genesis to the final years this investigation of the professional life of the Australian baritone, Peter Dawson (1882-1961) seeks to test the reality against the legend.

Parallel chapters dealing with the principal areas of professional experience leading to analyses of his repertoire are introduced by a general chronological overview which covers more general aspects of Peter Dawson's life and activities within a framework of broad historical events not revealed in the detailed chapters.

As hypothesised, the observation of his repertoire reveals an unexpected range and depth of quality. The investigation also reveals his secure competence as a composer and reveals that the extent of his abilities and the quantity of compositions are largely unknown and undervalued. As his fame is unquestioned it is argued that his repertoire must have reflected contemporaneous values; further, that these values were reflected in blind belief in the Empire, in a Commonwealth of Nations, and unquestioning loyalty to the Crown. As these values never changed for Peter Dawson he remained an icon for those generations which held true to the same conservative values.

But, as the investigation proves that his popularity was restricted to the British Empire and proves that his popularity gradually diminished, it can be argued that the gradual disintegration of interest in his type of repertoire paralleled a shift away from those values of Empire which he represented; that only a hard core continued to defend these ideals in face of the slow disintegration of the economic power and cultural influence of Great Britain in favour of other nations, particularly the USA, following the effects of World War I.

On the one hand, the investigation confirms that Peter Dawson is remembered as the legendary ballad singer: on the other, the investigation debunks the myth by exposing the over-simplification of a complex professional career and the manipulation of information which created this stereotype.

acknowledgements

The research would not have been possible without the enthusiastic cooperation of many libraries, archives and persons. I would like to specially acknowledge the consistent help and encouragement from the very beginning of Peter Burgis, retired archivist and independent producer of recordings of archival music, producer of the National Library Peter Dawson Centenary Exhibition and the EMI record set, *Ambassador of Song*. I would like to acknowledge the excellent preparatory work done by an unnamed 'student of the Canberra College of Education' in sorting the Peter Dawson papers, now held at the National Film and Sound Archive whom neither NFSA staff nor the University of Canberra (1996, 02.26) were able to identify, and I would particularly like to thank the staff of the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra for their support during the extensive indexing of the Peter Dawson documents. Similarly I am indebted to Miss Ruth Edge of EMI Archives, Hayes Middlesex, for her assistance.

Further: BBC Written Archives Caversham, National Library of Australia, Australian Archives, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and the archives of *The Mercury*, Hobart and *The Advertiser*, Adelaide; the State Libraries of Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria; the Performing Arts Museum of Victoria, the Performing Arts Collection, Adelaide Festival Centre, Her Majesty's Theatre Archives, Perth,; the Barr Smith Library, University of South Australia, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne, the Art & Music Library and Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania.

I would like to thank my friends Robert Dawe of Adelaide and Lyall Beven of Hobart, both very familiar with the Peter Dawson repertoire, and those many others individuals who have sent me information, particularly Peter Dawson's relations in Adelaide.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Anje, without whose patience, understanding and support this work would not have been possible.

Preliminary Information Abbreviations, Bibliographies, Reference Method

1. Abbreviations:

ABC: Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABC/AA: Australian Broadcasting Commission's Peter Dawson files are now held by Australian Archives: SP 368/1, 7/18/2, Box 4, ABC 1938-1962 (+69); press files, SP1011/2, Box 27, Job 10946/96, 303/6/3/33
AMN: *Australian Musical News*
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation Written Archives Centre, Caversham: Written Archives Centre publication notes request:

in footnotes as far as possible to use the identifying numbers of the relevant file together with the date of the item: e.g. BBC Written Archives Centre R34/473/1 3 August 1940 may be abbreviated to WAC after the initial reference.

This research project deals with all volumes in which Peter Dawson is cited in Index to BBC Programme Records (BBC Written Archives Centre, Programme Records, Volumes 1922-55):

In music programmes all artists are indexed, but composers are indicated only when a section of the programme is definitely assigned to a composer, in case of first performances, and when given special mention ...

For this project the identification BBC + date (eg: BBC, 1955, 03.01) seemed more obvious and has been used throughout.

EMI: Archive of Electric and Musical Industries Ltd., Hayes Middlesex. As a result of depressed conditions in the European phonograph and record business The Gramophone Company and Columbia Graphophone Company merged to form Electric and Musical Industries in March, 1931. Most Peter Dawson information stems from The Gramophone Company, file 2818, plus selected copies of the in-house magazine, *The Voice*.

HMV: "His Master's Voice" - a trademark of EMI

NFSA: National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra. There are two groups of pertinent documents: MS5030, Peter Dawson, A guide to his papers (1903-1962) and MS6829, ephemera from the Peter Dawson Appreciation Society (see below). The source is identified in the Bibliography by these MS numbers, not by NFSA.

PDAS: Peter Dawson Appreciation Society, (1982-1991). Formed in Wales by Ron Hughes to collect any available information about Peter Dawson, the society only proved viable for a limited period. A body of documentary evidence collected was sent to archivist, Peter Burgis, who lodged the documents which have been used in this dissertation with other Peter Dawson documents at the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra. NFSA included some of these documents in MS5030, but the bulk are in the associated MS6829, Peter Dawson Appreciation Society.

2. Bibliographies

description

01. Ephemera is a listing of such material referred directly or indirectly to in the text. The catalogue, MS5030, Peter Dawson, A guide to his papers (1903-1962) plus additional material, MS6829, received from the Peter Dawson Appreciation Society, Cardiff, Wales, consisted of a multiplicity of personal material such as sketches, private and professional photographs, offers of texts and music, letters of appreciation, letters from friends, business letters, menus, travel miscellany, press cuttings, and so forth. PDAS consisted of correspondence, newspaper cuttings, programmes, and sundry other materials.

As it was often impossible to identify a substantial number of items by author it was felt that many which dealt with the same theme, namely the protagonist or his profession, could be better identified by '**subject**'. These are: advertisements, albums (vocal), biography [unpublished biographical information], cartoons, menus, newspapers and associated press material, photographs, and programmes.

Ephemera also contains substantial **additional material** held by State libraries, university libraries, institutions, and individuals or collected by the author. In the last case no further specification of location is made.

Additional material from EMI, BBC and ABC archives have been listed independently. EMI and BBC have been nominated as authors, but the later ABC, which also consisted primarily of memoranda, press releases and press cuttings, is listed only as Date and Descriptor.

The bibliography has been sub-divided into:

01.1 ephemera:

with the following listed separately:

01.2: NFSA, MS5030 Sheet Music Folio Packages A-P: by Song Title

01.3 EMI

01.4 BBC

01.5 ABC (held by Australian Archives)

02.0 published material and authored manuscripts.

3. Reference Method

Items are entered by: author or subject, (year), date and title or descriptor, publisher, source if archival. The date, the month followed by day in decimal form, has been included in the title wherever possible. This method was used to sort entries sequentially. As the method was the most effective for multiple entries under same author (BBC, EMI), for consistency, it was practical to apply the method generally.

Published material is presented in the normal manner, but the underline in Ephemera, including EMI and BBC archives, is not a 'Title' but a 'Descriptor'. If the description includes a title it is inserted within single quotation marks; if the publisher/source contains a 'Title' it is *italicised*.

Examples:

01.1 ephemera:

- Dawson, P. (1934) 10.20: to Leslie Boosey re: alterations to songs.
MS5030/14/23/1
- Neate, K. (1984) 06.14: personal communication to Ron Hughes, PDAS.
München: Neate. MS5030/15/box 6/folder 24/envelope 3
- newspaper (1912) 05.18: glowing reviews from the British Press.
Adelaide: *The Advertiser*.
- newspaper. (1955) 04.26: 'Old Father Dawson puts life in TV', London:
Daily Express.

01.3. EMI archives:

- EMI (1907) 04.02: letter of agreement for three years. The Gramophone
Company

01.5 ABC/AA:

1938	06	17	James to Moses: response to initial Dawson letter
------	----	----	---

02.0 published material and manuscripts

- Bronson, B. H. (1980). 'Ballad' in S. Sadie (Ed.), New Grove Dictionary
of Music & Musicians. London: Macmillan.
- Brooke, S. (1984). The Railways of Australia. Melbourne: Dreamweaver.

footnotes

Footnotes correlate with the bibliographic arrangement by author/subject, year, date; the above being:

- Dawson, 1934, 10.20
Neate, 1980, 06.14
newspaper, 1912, 05.18
newspaper, 1955, 04.26
EMI, 1907, 04.02
ABC/AA, 1938, 06.17
Bronson, 1980,
Brooke, 1984

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preface

A composer writes the overture after he has written his opera because the original concept develops as work progresses: the overture becomes a brief summary or recapitulation. Similarly, my initial conception of Peter Dawson has changed as I have delved into a variety of archives and collated a substantial body of documentary information.

A shallow observation of the information generally available would have produced nothing more than the conventional view of this artist, whereas the purpose of the research was to provide readers who knew the artist with sufficient information to review their opinion and those who did not, with sufficient information to evaluate the man and the environment in which he lived and worked. The style of writing has been described as 'thick description': information is very detailed and sources accurately noted, but even so it is based on sampling. A specific song or recording, for example, also represents other songs or recordings in the same style; recordings or repertoire from various sources were collated to establish patterns. The work begins with a summary of his life; the subsequent chapters consider his development in his major areas of activity. Some general information has been woven into the text in order to appreciate the artist in the context of his time rather than in isolation.

Peter Dawson died some thirty-five years ago. It may come as a surprise to those who have grown up with his music to hear that during the course of this study it has become apparent that many people born since then have never heard of him. For several generations Peter Dawson was a by-word. Peter Dawson was as much a folk-hero as Donald Bradman or Kingsford-Smith. He was, quite literally, a household name throughout Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and much of the British Empire for five decades.

Peter Dawson was not the first famous Australian singer: his best-known forerunner was Nellie Melba, who had taken the operatic world by storm and used her great talent and strong personality to retain her position.¹ Although their paths did cross, she was from an earlier generation and belonged to a different musical circle. Peter Dawson was not the only Australian singer of his generation to make a name for himself in London. He was contemporaneous with Malcolm McEachern, Harold Williams, Horace Stevens, Gertrude Johnson, Ada Crossley, Amy Castles and Florence Austral,² a generation which paved the way for steady waves of Australian

¹Melba, Nellie (Dame) (1861-1931) 'Australia's 'Queen of Opera' who borrowed Melbourne for her name and gave it back to Australia's musical history' - 1886 to Marchesi for lessons, international star of mythical proportions from first performance as Gilda 1887. Commanded huge salaries. Famous early recordings. Founded Melba Conservatorium Melbourne. (*1000 Famous Australians*, 1978, 327). For Melba recordings see Chapter 3.

²Austral, Florence (Fawaz, Wilson), 1894-1968 particularly famous as Wagnerian singer; toured Australia and America with husband John Amadio interspersing recitals with operatic appearances ... many admirable recordings incl early-electric German language series of Ring from Covent Garden. (New Grove, 1980,708)

Castles, Amy (1881-1951) London debut 1901 with Ada Crossley and Clara Butt. [for detail Chapter 4.]

Crossley, Ada (1874-1929) 'One of the greatest oratorio contraltos of her time'. 1894 London to Santley, then Paris Marchesi. London debut 1895, toured USA where she was the first

singers who made the pilgrimage to London and continue to do so to this day.

Yet Peter Dawson is arguably the most famous Australian male singer. He can be reckoned the counterpoint to Melba although they belong to different generations. Though they are both acknowledged masters of the art of classical singing, Peter Dawson did not become famous through opera, like Melba, but through his singular success and longevity in a new medium: recording. His success as a recording star - from primitive wax cylinders into the age of stereo recordings - ensured his popularity for fifty years.

Yet Peter Dawson was not simply 'a voice'. Though his fame had spread with the growing popularity of the gramophone then radio it was balanced by many lengthy international concert tours. And in the privacy of his home or when travelling on ship or by train he used his musical skills to transpose music to suit his voice, to rearrange repertoire and to compose a number a highly successful songs. The musical skills evidenced in his compositions are a summation not only of his abilities; the subject matter and style of composition is another reflection of this man and the taste of his time.

There is surprisingly little substantive information about Peter Dawson. Only two books are dedicated solely to his life, his autobiography (1951) and a book by Vose (1987). Although there are many shorter entries in dictionaries, encyclopedias, programmes, newspaper reports, every one is securely based on his memoirs or some earlier interviews.

The difficulty of further investigation is exacerbated because most biographers have become interested in his life through listening to his recordings and have then been inspired to trace and catalogue the recordings. Even these authors have had little satisfaction; due to the number of songs, the questionable precision of cataloguing at the beginnings

musician to have a record issued under the Victor Record Company's 'red seal' series. Visited South Africa, 1903 to Aust with Percy Grainger. Married Dr Francis Mueche of Adelaide. Stayed in London, a favourite singer of Queen Victoria. (1000 Famous Australians)

Johnston, Gertrude O.B.E. (1894 -) protege of Dame Nellie Melba, princ. soprano Covent Garden; first to broadcast opera for BBC founder and Hon Director National Theatre Movement of Australia since 1936. (Who's Who in Australia 1959)

McEachern, Malcolm (1883-1945) Two young Autralians who had yet to leave the country made strong impressions in Sydney in August 1908 ... W.M.McEachern revealed an excellent bass voice and made a successful debut. This was Malcolm McEachern who many years later, as half of the Flotsam & Jetsam duo, made a famous recording *Is He an Aussie, Lizzie?* (p.156). The bass M.M. sang in Tivoli theatres in 1917. (p.179). By 1930 many local and expatriate performers could be heard on discs, not all recorded here. They included: ... Basses: Malcolm McEachern (p.201). (Brisbane, (ed), 1991, *Entertaining Australia*)

Stevens, Horace (1876-1950) 'Hailed as one of the greatest singers of his time; sang *Elijah* 500 times' 1919 debut under Henry Wood thereafter kept busy with important oratorio and choral festivals as a member of the National Opera Company. Return to Aust 1938 to teach singing at University Conservatorium, Melbourne. (1000 Famous Australians)

'opera & oratorio singer, later taught in Melbourne, praised by Elgar as best Elijah, excellent Wotan' (Scott, 1979, 182)

Williams, Harold (1893-1976) 'A baritone, teacher and broadcaster who brought credit to Australia' 1919 to England, 15 years one of the leading soloists in England, opera, oratorio, recitals, regular appearances with British Nat Opera and Covent Garden. Sang under prominent conductors incl. Toscanini, famous as *Elijah*. Returned 1952 to become professor of singing at NSW Con. (1000 Famous Australians)

of the recording industry, his participation in many ensembles and a fashion for singing under false names, a satisfactory catalogue has not yet been completed.

I never saw Peter Dawson. My parents did not own a gramophone. My personal recollection of listening to anything is radio during the Second World War about 1942, after my family had moved to Melbourne from the country. My memories are vague. One was only occasionally consciously aware of the radio, which provided a continuous background noise in the house.. At one stage my younger brother and I listened avidly to *The Top Ten* on one station, then switched to another station which had another 'Top Ten'. My parents did not listen to the national broadcaster at all; they generally listened to 3DB, a commercial station, which provided a fairly eclectic spectrum of music. I grew up with 'pop' music of the Bing Crosby/Louis Armstrong era and have always considered Frank Sinatra a young interloper. But 3DB also fed us a diet of popular classics in the direction of Strauss waltzes and Chopin Études or lively operatic overtures from Rossini and Verdi and probably from Mozart and a good many others. We listened to a range of opera singers singing popular arias like *mi chiamamo Mimi* or *una furtiva lagrima*, plenty of operetta of the 'Girls were made to Loff and Keess' variety, and, of course, copious quantities of *Open Road*, *Open Sky*, *The Green-Eyed Dragon*, *Wandering the King's Highway*, *The Road to Mandalay* and songs of that ilk.

My decision to write about Peter Dawson did not arise from any enthusiasm for recording but from singing professionally as a bass-baritone in opera and in concert for forty-five years; the last twenty-three years were coupled with a substantive post as Senior Lecturer in Voice at a University. I have personally enjoyed the widest and most eclectic range of repertoire through staged performances, concerts with orchestra, recitals and studio recordings which has been enhanced by the selection of repertoire for every type of voice in a demanding Conservatorium curriculum.

Like most casual listeners I pigeon-holed Peter Dawson merely as a popular ballad singer, as the mythical singer, we could all admire, and - without thinking much about it - the ballads which Peter Dawson made famous were standard fare in my repertoire; standard fare which, like all Australian basses and baritones, we had inherited from our teachers. But after I had found two old albums of Bass and Baritone Songs while searching for teaching repertoire I was surprised to find that Peter Dawson had sung and recorded practically every song in those books. These albums did not contain any of his well-known ballads but repertoire ranging from baroque arias to art songs of the late nineteenth century and many folk songs from England, Ireland and Scotland which I had never associated with the him.

I was drawn to factors of interest to the singer, such as the breadth of his repertoire, his vocal range, development of technique and the practical aspects of practice, tedious repetition, striving for aesthetic perfection. Had I been more familiar with recordings I might have had a better idea of this material but I only discovered the connection slowly by perusing documents in a number of archives, principally his personal documents held by the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra. His musicianship became

apparent in the unexpected wealth of his compositions, in his penmanship, and in the repertoire range of his concert programmes. There were clues to the complexities of negotiations and to his financial returns. It became apparent that Peter Dawson was more than the one-dimensional character suggested by his famous 'ballads'. A broader picture of the man in his time, rather than one based on adulation, was emerging.

There is no doubt that the myth of the ballad singer exists. There is little doubt that his autobiography has biblical respect from those who hold true to the myth. Yet through the identification of facts, through seemingly pedantic corrections to minor detail I hope to impact on the myth. I hope that my search and personal evaluation will reveal more of the substance of the man and establish him as an artist and musician, moulded by his era and its circumstance, who has contributed more to the profile of Australian musicians than the even the myth allows.

Chapter 1

Peter Dawson in Context

For generations Peter Dawson was considered the most famous Australian male singer. When an article about Peter Dawson appeared in The Gramophone Company magazine, *The Voice*, in 1937,¹ it began like a fairy story:

Once upon a time there was a young man called Peter Dawson. In the year 1905 he walked into a recording studio, and lived happily ever after.

Certainly, Peter Dawson rose to fame through the recording industry. Ballads, with which Peter Dawson's name became inextricably associated, were essentially the 'pop' music of the era. As Peter Dawson became famous because of the promotional capacity of the recording industry, newspaper reports, programmes, press releases, record covers, interviews, biographies told 'The Peter Dawson Story' the way he liked it.

Peter Dawson was a constantly in demand for interviews and press releases. He was known to be a good subject and a name on which to hang a report. Much of the contact with the Press was initiated by agents, promoters and the recording company, yet there is also the strong impression that the basic information not only stemmed from Peter Dawson but that he understood the value of initiating publicity himself:²

His popularity he owes to a great extent to his bubbling vitality and infectious good-humour, which he attributes partly to his Scottish blood, partly to the health-giving properties of good Australian food and good Australian air - all well sprinkled with the sea voyages ...

Even his last days of illness, his death and probate a year later, were reported as if they were in the public interest. His career had placed him firmly centre-stage and he helped ensure that he stayed there.

It would be reasonable to expect that his autobiography would be a reliable record of his life - certainly most sources have used it to biographical purpose. Geoffrey Parsons remembers that Peter Dawson was recalling stories from the past when they were on tour in New Zealand prior to the 1950 tour of Great Britain, probably in preparation for the book. But Peter Dawson did not write his autobiography; he was in Australia when it was published. A 'ghost-writer', unidentified, may have been the typist, but he had written to a friend that he had left the manuscript with his brother-in-law for completion.³ It would be prudent to challenge his statements for 'his memory is not always accurate, and it is a pity he did not get someone to

¹EMI, 1937, 08.00, *The Voice*

²EMI 1948, 01.00

³Kowin, J., 1958, 08.21 to Peter Dawson: 'you mentioning your memoirs and that Tom Noble was to edit & publish them'.

read the proofs' writes London critic, L. A. G. Strong.⁴

When Gladys Moncrieff said⁵ that '... he had such a bright personality, was a marvellous raconteur, and always gave you a laugh', she summed up the main theme in all biographies, for despite his success he always retained a basic energy, a youthfulness, a love of pranks, an 'Australianness',⁶ and like all good story-tellers, regarded the effect of the story, the culminating punch-line, as more important than strict veracity.⁷ While he was highly regarded for his integrity, his openness, his honesty, his professionalism, it was generally acknowledged that he could tell a good yarn.

As the story of his life consists of a constant repetition of amazing successes, it is a wonder that it did not become bland in the telling; but Australians liked to hear the good yarn over and over again, and besides, Australia needed a tall poppy to rebut feelings of condescension towards colonials and colonial artists. So it was pleased to tell the story of a true Australian who became an international icon - and created a Peter Dawson myth.

There is a Peter Dawson myth, as if Peter Dawson was not a person but something abstract. And so he was: for many he was simply a voice. When audiences listened to him on the radio or on recordings, they did not know what he looked like: they projected their own image. Though this image might vary from song to song, they felt they knew him well. His voice became part of their lives. As W. A. Chislett remarked in his obituary:⁸

With the death of Peter Dawson ... tens of thousands of middle-aged and older admirers who never even saw, let alone met him in person, will feel that they have lost a friend.

Because he was a dominant public figure, he tends to be delineated by his professional achievements, especially recording, without much reference to the private person. But, in order to find the foundation of the strength of purpose and energy necessary for the achievements which raised him head and shoulders above his contemporaries, his personal life, the enigma of preparation, and the complexities of a performer's life need to be highlighted.

To challenge the myth through the identification of facts, through seemingly pedantic corrections of detail may make no impact on the myth, yet it may reveal more of the substance of the man, may reveal any difference between the public and private persona, may establish what moulded him and his society. Those who no longer know who Peter Dawson was may be reminded that he was symbolic for the society which they have inherited, an emerging society isolated by distance and moulded by the unquestioning acceptance of the infallibility of the British Empire and

⁴London newspaper, 1951, 10.04, L.A.G. Strong: detail Appendix 1. Also, dates on photographs are not always reliable - some give the impression that they may have been added later.

⁵newspaper, 1961,11.16, *The Peter Dawson I knew*

⁶biography, 1993, 03.25: even in old age he still carried a 'ging' [a shanghai, a catapult] with him, with which he fired at the cats in his garden to keep them away from the birds.

⁷biography, 1993, 03.25 (interview with Peter Dawson's nephews): He was a real practical joker, we never knew what was fact or fiction.

⁸ newspaper, 1961, 11.00, *The Gramophone*, p.247

the Crown.

The most superficial investigation of this persistent view of Peter Dawson reveals that it is over-simplified. Peter Dawson had a complex career founded on his professional abilities but moulded by the extraordinary opportunities which presented themselves.

Initially, a broad chronological overview should provide the background against which to isolate the specific detail of various aspects of the career and the resulting repertoire of the Australian baritone, Peter Dawson, 1882-1961. Peter Dawson was not a major political figure embroiled in the affairs of Empire and the World; he was merely a citizen caught up in the ebb and flow of events which affected every other citizen. Whatever he became, his life and achievements evolved within a specific period. Whatever the outcome, he was a product of his age, so the events of his life have more relevance if related to the broad spectrum of the period.

Peter Dawson's life began in Australia prior to the turn of the century. During his long working life he was based predominantly in London but he always retained his loyalty and affection for his homeland: hence, this biography may be highlighted against the backdrop of events affecting Great Britain and Australia as part of the British Empire.

History is at best a broad sweep hypothesised from myriad details. This broad sweep may describe salient features, which appear to have had little effect on the day-to-day life of the individual. As an individual, Peter Dawson rose to fame propelled by the developments of a communications industry unknown to previous generations.⁹ The ebb and flow of his fortunes was interrupted by the ebb and flow of major political events over which neither he nor that industry had control.

As a professional singer may stem from any environment in any country, the only common factor is that freak of nature, a voice. The latent possibilities of a voice must first be recognised, then supported by the will to cultivate it until it becomes a professional instrument. This self-awareness must in turn be coupled with a sympathetic social environment, which encourages development. A confluence of factors can never be copied again, so an historical chronology merely broadens the perspective from which the life and achievements of the protagonist may be observed.

1882 -1901: the formative years

Queen Victoria ruled from 1838 to 1901, so Peter Dawson, born January 31 1882 in Adelaide, South Australia, was raised during the latter part of her reign.¹⁰ So often deprecatingly referred to in England as 'the colonies', Australia became, in fact, one of the 'Dominions' of a powerful far flung Empire that covered 'almost one-quarter of the land's surface and more than one-quarter of the total population'.¹¹

When Peter Dawson was born the relationship of Australia to England was

⁹Chapter 3: Recording ; Chapter 5: Broadcasting

¹⁰General historical information is based on the relatively straight-forward Moss, Peter, 1978, *Modern World History* and the more complex Barnard, Majorie, 1963, *A History of Australia*.

¹¹Moss, 1978, 9-10.

indeed that of an independent colony, or more correctly, independent colonies, for South Australia was one of six colonies with ties to England.¹² The Australian colonies had always been individualists. 'Their origins were diverse, their capitals were widely separated from one another, and the outlook of their people ... was parochial in the extreme'.¹³

South Australia and Western Australia differed in their origins from the eastern colonies and looked directly to England.¹⁴ They were impossibly distant from Sydney. Sea routes were hazardous, overland transport was primitive and slow. South Australia, bounded to the north by barren lands, was agricultural rather than pastoral and differed considerably in temper from her sisters in the east. With a doctrinaire beginning, she suffered many early hardships, had a greater infusion of foreign blood, mostly from Germans in search of religious liberty, ran to small holdings instead of big ones, and was progressive but poor.¹⁵

In the 1880s labour was inexperienced and inadequate, wages were high, land was cheap, full employment gave security 'the employee as well as the employer looked forward to owning his own house and garden' but 'things reached a pass when practically everyone was living beyond his means and the public and private interest bill was rising'. 'The situation was over-ripe':¹⁶ in December 1889 a major building society went into liquidation. The boom ended; the depression of the 1890s began.

In 1891, when Peter Dawson was nine, the population of Australia was 3,177,823,¹⁷ the population of South Australia around 350,000,¹⁸ and the population of the City of Adelaide about 40,000.¹⁹

Primary school records indicate that Peter Dawson attended from 1887-1893. Secondary school records indicate that Peter Dawson attended from 1895-1898. His autobiography reveals that on leaving school he was apprenticed as a plumber to his father's business.

In 1898, before he had even thought of singing, an American firm set up its European operation in London: *The Gramophone Company* was formed, which would be the vehicle for Peter Dawson's later rise to fame.

The year Peter Dawson started having voice lessons cannot be determined with any accuracy, but circa eighteen years old would be reasonable for the adult male voice to show its early potential, that is, in his case, 1899-1900. From the end of 1899 there is information about those early successes which led him to choose the life of a professional singer.

On 11th October 1899 the Boer War began. Although it was not an

¹²NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, WA, SA

¹³Barnard, 1963, 436

¹⁴ibid., 439

¹⁵ibid., 440

¹⁶ibid., 411

¹⁷ibid., 410

¹⁸ Census 30.4.1881	Males	145,113	
	Females	<u>130,231</u>	275,344
Census 31.3.1901	Males	180,485	
	Females	<u>177,861</u>	358,346

¹⁹Adelaide City Council, Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1902. 11.1212: 1898-99: 38913; 1899-00: 39053; 1900-01: 39193; 1901-02: 39345

Another document: 1882 "approximately 40,000", at 31.12 1899: 41,005

Australian war, men from some of the colonies chose to participate, among them, one of Peter Dawson's elder brothers, Thomas, who served for three years.²⁰

The collapse of the 1890s suggested to the colonies that some limited form of federation might give greater stability.²¹ To consolidate their agreement 'An Act to Constitute the Commonwealth of Australia' was proclaimed 17th September 1900. Australia became one of the independent colonies, which were called 'dominions' from 1907.²² On 22nd January 1901, before the Boer War had finished, Queen Victoria died after a reign of sixty four years. The Royal House of Coburg continued its reign as Edward VII succeeded to the throne. The first Commonwealth Parliament of Australia sat in Melbourne on 9th May 1901, with four main areas of responsibility: a White Australia policy, defence, tariffs, and labour legislation.²³ During these two decades, Peter Dawson had grown to manhood, made the first impressions as a singer, and, supported by his family, had decided to travel to London to try his luck in the musical profession.

1902-10: a career begins

At the beginning of 1902 Peter Dawson sailed to England with his eldest brother James and arrived there towards the end of April. The Boer War ended on May 31st. Although it took time to become apparent, the Boer War had changed the relationship of the class structures in England. The lower classes in particular, affected by the growing demand for independence by returning soldiers, started to express dissatisfaction with rule by a bourgeoisie which had grown rich under Victoria's rule.

In the entertainment industry at that time the old forms: house concerts, classical concerts, oratorio, opera, music hall, even light summer seaside entertainment and pantomime, were still the prospective sources of livelihood for a young Australian prepared to study and work his way into the singing profession. In 1902 he studied in Glasgow while staying with relations; in 1903 he settled in London, studying with Charles Santley, a famous singer and teacher, and waited for those first engagements which determine a career.

Although he would not have been aware of it, in retrospect, 1904 turned out to be the most significant year in his career. He auditioned for the 'talking machine', a new-fangled contraption, little more than a toy, which was becoming popular as home entertainment. In 1877 Thomas Edison had patented a cylinder, which would enable recorded voices to be replayed. Emile Berliner, a German emigré to America, adapted Edison's principle to a flat disc. By the time Peter Dawson reached London there were several companies recording Edison cylinders and one recording discs. Although the gramophone company has been formed in London in 1898 to service the European market a reasonable recording quality had only existed since

²⁰biography, family tree, 1996, 01.21

²¹Barnard, 1963, 456, 461

²²Moss, 1978, 294-5: Certain British Colonies were granted a form of independence, Canada, 1867, Australia, 1901, New Zealand, 1907, and South Africa, 1910. 'After 1907, to distinguish them from other colonies, these independent colonies were called dominions.'

²³Barnard, 1963, 458-461

1902,²⁴ so when Peter Dawson was accepted by *The Gramophone Company* he was, as it were, 'in on the ground floor'.

In 1905 Peter Dawson married Annie Mortimer Noble, 'Nan', who also sang. His name was just beginning to appear in the Gramophone Company catalogue. The first contract, as opposed to casual employment, was signed in 1906, but the forerunner in form of all subsequent contracts was the next one for three years from 24th April 1907 to 23rd April 1910. The small-market classical music was reserved for famous opera stars: but, as 'the bulk of music recorded' was 'ephemeral',²⁵ Peter Dawson was not only a featured artist but was one of a small stable of young singers,²⁶ who also sang in any combination: duets, trios, quartettes, even as part of backing groups. This is reflected in his contracts, which generally specified a retainer or bonus, plus a fee for each solo, reduced for duets, and reduced still further for quartets, smaller ensembles and choruses.²⁷

The pattern of 1907 appears to have been repeated through 1908 and into 1909. Peter Dawson had been accepted by the recording industry but was also active wherever he could find work. On the one hand he was appearing at the famous Ballad concerts, on the other he was working the Music Halls costumed and made-up as a Scottish pop singer. In 1909 he was able to return to Australia, as support artist to the Australian soprano, Amy Castles, in the days before the gramophone craze took the nation. The tour lasted from September 1909 until February 1910.

1910-14: the artist is established

When he had returned to London in April 1910, Peter Dawson's contract with the Gramophone Company was renewed for another two years (25.04.10-23.05.13), with the added proviso that the contract continue to be renegotiated 'for as long thereafter as may be mutually agreed'. His recording contract did not prevent him from touring provided he gave the company advance notice.²⁸ The Gramophone Company understood the benefit of touring, not only to the artists, but to themselves. Tours provided variety and extra income for the artist, audiences saw the recording artist in the flesh so the tour promoted the industry, and the Gramophone Company had the opportunity to advertise its products in programmes and promotional material.

As reviews of his achievements were appearing in Australian papers, where he was already being hailed as the most famous singer since Melba, Peter Dawson decided to tour Australia and New Zealand under his own name, taking Nan with him as one of the associate artists. Relatively close to the Amy Castles tour there must have been a risk but it is indicative of his growing fame and self-confidence that the tour was so successful, that he felt encouraged to return again in 1914. Before the 1914 tour had finished the *Adelaide Advertiser* proudly referred to him as 'Adelaide's Own Star'.

²⁴explained Chapter 3

²⁵explained Chapter 3

²⁶EMI, c.1910, *The Voice: Principals of our Light Opera Company*

²⁷EMI 1910, 04.25; EMI, 1912, 11.16 ff.

²⁸EMI, 1910, 04.25 ff.

Meanwhile the values of his recording contracts continued to increase: these increases are certain indications that not only his popularity and therefore his value as a recording artist was increasing, but that the gramophone company was in a stage of positive growth.

During the period 1904 - 1914, while Peter Dawson's star was in the ascendancy, King Edward VII had died on 6th May 1910 and George V had ascended the throne, which he was to occupy for the next twenty-six years. In other circles the period was marked by a '... mounting tide of discontent ... organised through the trade unions ... massive strikes 1911-4 ... suffragettes fighting to give women the vote ... opposition to Home Rule in Ireland':²⁹

But despite these signs that all was not well, the political process in Britain went on much as usual. ... Labour MPs 11[in] 1901, 29[in] 1906 ... Parliament was still dominated by the Conservatives and Liberals. ... support not on class lines until after World War 1, a working man was just as likely to vote Liberal or Conservative as a rich man. ... the Englishman of the first years of the twentieth century largely knew his place in society and kept it, whether he was master or servant, upper, middle, or working class.

1914-1918: World War I

Peter Dawson was touring in Australasia again when World War 1 broke out on 4 August, 1914. Not only 'troops from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa and other parts of the British Empire' fought as allies but also soldiers from 'French and Belgian possessions'.³⁰ With the declaration of war the infant Commonwealth of Australia faced its first major test. The population was not yet five million. As a nation it had not known war. Barnard submits that:³¹

many Australians felt a hidden discontent with the absence of battle honours, a false concept that manhood and nationhood must be proved by deeds of valour. When an eminent cleric referred to the struggle as "a trade war" everyone was shocked ... The nobility of sacrifice, the heroic image, the high platitudes of politicians and journalists, were sweet to the ears ... There was a true willingness for sacrifice and proud generosity.

What else would Australia do? It was a country of immigrants or descendants of immigrants, predominantly from England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland:³²

Everything effective, including ideas, was imported ... Not only the initial ideas and the population but the means of livelihood and development were imported into Australia. The continent did not initiate, it accepted or rejected. ... The ingress of ideas, people, commodities, usages ... was, by and large, regulated and controlled. The source was inevitably the United Kingdom ... [with] a virtual monopoly on the carrying trade. ... Its destiny was being shaped in the northern hemisphere ... Australia, in its Pacific and Asian context, remained Anglo-Saxon to the core.

²⁹Moss, 1978, 10-11

³⁰Moss, 1978, 25

³¹Barnard, 1963, 483

³²Barnard, 1963, 479

This led, naturally, to a romantic view of war. War was portrayed as dramatic and exciting: death with honour, sacrifice for others, laying down one's life for one's country. One's country meant England. Prime Minister Cook encapsulated the tenor of the time with: "Whatever happens. Australia is part of the Empire right to the full. When the Empire is at war so is Australia at war." And Andrew Fisher, leader of the Opposition, not to be outdone: "Should the worst happen, after everything has been done that honour will permit, Australia will stand behind the mother country to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling"

To do so the Government exhausted Australian resources to equip, maintain and transport men, horses, weapons and sustenance the 12,000 miles to Europe. National hysteria which 'led on to a strict censorship of newspapers, mails, cables, films, foreign books and pamphlets, even phonograph records' was directed toward some 34,000 Germans residents in Australia. Although 'there were no proven instances of enemy spying' 'forty-two place names were changed in South Australia alone because they had a German flavour'.³³

The war ruined the professional concert touring business. Peter Dawson was stranded in Australia. Only a welcome invitation to tour for Tivoli theatres saved him from bankruptcy.³⁴ On 11 December 1915 Peter Dawson and Nan sang a farewell concert in Sydney then, despite the dangers, left for England because they was anxious to return to England where Peter Dawson's contract with the Gramophone Company ran until 7th April 1916. The wartime journey took them around the Cape of Good Hope so it was opportune to fit in a tour of South Africa on the way back to London. An EMI report to the Directors³⁵ indicates that Peter Dawson did not arrive back in England until the beginning of October 1916 and that he had not completed his obligations to the company. As a consequence, he was not re-engaged.

Information about his activities in London during 1917 is scanty. The war was intensifying: the Americans joined the Allied forces, the October Revolution took place in Russia. Like all Australians, Peter Dawson was affected by the war. As the sagas of Gallipoli, the Lighthorsemen, the battles in France focussed attention on all eligible males some would have asked, where was this most prominent son of Australia. Peter Dawson claims that he unsuccessfully tried to enlist in South Africa and in England, until, induced by a request from the Australian Government to undertake a fund-raising tour, he and Nan undertook the dangerous journey back home by the beginning of 1918.

Peter Dawson liked to be seen as a returned soldier. His promotion of his Army career during World War I. was an important aspect of the way he wanted the world to see him. It appears to stem from the effect the First World War had on Australians in general and on the need for men to be recognised as a participants in the War. Returned soldiers occupied a special place in the Australian myth: they symbolised the strength and courage of

³³based on Barnard, 1963, 493

³⁴Dawson, 1951, 83

³⁵EMI, 1916, 09.25

the nation and were proof of that egalitarian mateship held to be an Australian trait. In every reference to Peter Dawson of any length phrases such as, 'during the World War served with the Australian forces in Europe'³⁶, 'served World War I, Qld. reinforcements, company sergt.-major'³⁷ can be found.

There are many examples of the value he put upon his military service. He loved to talk to 'old soldiers' and have an honoured place in Anzac services; he was a member of an RSL club and an honoured guest of others; Government agencies could call on him at any time to support a patriotic project. In 1931, during his first visit to Australia since the end of the War, he was used for the Adelaide 'Anzac House Appeal' pictured as a rotund, balding, concert singer holding the music of one of his most famous soldier songs, *Boots*.³⁸ In a publicity article³⁹ for his 1933 tour he emphasises the military's deliberate lack of regard for his fame for he was immediately set to work 'peeling spuds' - which identified him clearly as one of the boys! But before long 'his voice was utilised in drilling rookies, when he was promoted to the rank of sergeant-major' - which identified leadership qualities more appropriate to his name! Famous though he was, he never forgot his mates for 'he is a member of the Rose Bay Branch of the League and, whether in Australia or not, keeps himself financial'.

Performances in Hobart in 1951 coincided with Anzac Day: the whole palette was used again:⁴⁰ a photo of Peter Dawson exchanging yarns with a veteran in the Repatriation Hospital; a headline *Singer Will Attend Anzac Service* noting that 'Mr. Dawson is 69 and served with the A.I.F. in Europe during the First World War' and that 'Mr. Dawson attended a reception given by the State president of the R.S.L.' yesterday.

Information may appear in many sources but ultimately it stems from Peter Dawson himself. In his autobiography he devotes a chapter to 'The First World War'. He was in Australia when war broke out. Concert reviews prove that he continued to tour in Australia then New Zealand until at least mid-June 1915; in November he and Nan sang a 'Farewell Concert' in Sydney, so would not have left Australia before the beginning of 1916. In fact, he was not back in London until October 1916 because he conveniently fitted in the tour in South Africa on the way. At that stage he had not enlisted. In London 'the High Commissioner for Australia'⁴¹ was of the opinion that he was more useful to the Allied War Effort entertaining the troops or singing at charity or fund-raising events,⁴² but:⁴³

I was not content as the war went on and on, and the end seemed to get farther away. I felt that I ought to be doing something more, so I decided to

³⁶Adelaide newspaper, 1933, 05.00

³⁷*Who's Who In Australia*, 1933, and 1959

³⁸Dawson sketches 1931-38: 'Buy a brick - wear a brick - to build up Anzac House', Kerbstone Meagraith Adelaide 1931'. Meagraith was also at the 'Good Companions' dinner with Hambourg in 1931 (framed menu, 1931, ABC Adelaide)

³⁹Sydney newspaper, 1933, 11.25

⁴⁰Hobart newspaper, 1951, 04.24, much from Reuter 1938, 10.24 in same newspaper archive

⁴¹High Commissioners first appointed 1926

⁴²Dawson, 1951, 85

⁴³Dawson, 1951, 87

return to Australia and join the forces. I arranged for a short tour of South Africa on my way home and then a tour on behalf of the Australian Government for War Loan purposes; then I joined the Army.

The 'War Loan' was more likely a recruiting drive through the country areas of Queensland. Among his documents is a photograph of two cars and two people, one in uniform, with a pencil note 'taken during tour of Q'land', and talking to an old Army comrade Peter Dawson recalled⁴⁴ that 'we had a *March To Freedom* campaign through Brisbane and Toowoomba and over the stringy-bark flats with me on a lorry singing all the recruiting songs of the day'.

Following the tour, on 13th February 1918, Peter Dawson very publicly enlisted in 8th. Queensland General Service Reinforcements in Brisbane; but though 'attested' on 13th February, he did not actually join until 1st June. After he had attested he recollected driving 'around Sydney on a lorry singing recruiting songs' and 'turning up in Martin-place, Sydney' singing 'Come along boys and join us, too' and 'I don't want to lose you, but I fear you'll have to go' from *The Blue Dragoons*,⁴⁵ a song he had made famous, which indicates that the recruiting was combined with *Three farewell concerts to Private Peter Dawson* 'prior to his departure for the Front with the A.I.F.'⁴⁶

By the time he left for the European front he was, according to his book, 'Battalion Orderly Sergeant'; in an interview a few months earlier⁴⁷ 'company sergeant-major'. As the troopship approached the Panama Canal news of the Armistice broke: 'the majority of the troops were heartbroken with disappointment' as the ship turned around to head for home.

This then was the military service on which Peter Dawson fed for the rest of his life, which again raises the questions: what was Australia's attitude to war?, how did regard Australia regard its fighting men?, how did the general hysteria affect the individual? In 1914 the Prime Minister had set the tone with his 'when the Empire is at war so is Australia at war'. 'Service at the front' dominated the minds of Australians, whose 'sacrifice and proud generosity' was influenced by a bombardment of 'high platitudes' by politicians and journalists'.

The propaganda machine of Empire pressured every young man to enlist, but that pressure derived not only from secular Government and the sensationalist media, but from the Church.⁴⁸ Being of Anglo-Celtic origin Australians were a largely Christian community; Anglicans (39.5%) and Catholics (23%) dominated, followed by Methodists (12.6%), strongest in South Australia since the nineteenth century, and Presbyterians (12.9%),

⁴⁴Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.01 interview

⁴⁵Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.01 interview

⁴⁶programme, 1918, 06.11: Tuesday 11, Wednesday 12, Thursday 13 June

⁴⁷newspaper, 1951, 05.24; see also ABC/AA, 1939, 08.25, *Courier Mail*: Peter Dawson will end career in Brisbane: befitting as signed up there for WW1 - signed up in Brisbane because warmer than South - they made him a sergeant-major "And a pretty tough one, too", [remarked a friend]

⁴⁸the following based on McKernan, 1980, *Australian Churches at War, Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918*

whose stronghold was Victoria. Although to 'stereotype is dangerous statistically' 'assumptions made by church leaders' were that Anglicans straddled classes but had fewer in the working class, which was mainly Catholic. The Methodists were regarded as an upwardly mobile middle-class and the Presbyterians retailers, a sprinkling of wealthy⁴⁹ graziers, and solid middle class businessmen, like Peter Dawson's father and brothers.

For this reason the clergy, some of them from 'the old country', saw themselves as the 'wise men of the tribe', responsible for the moral fibre of the young nation. 'Clergymen from all denominations displayed a surprising unanimity about the war', they 'devoted enormous energy to the war; they preached about it, spoke about it at public meetings, and wrote about it in church papers'. They welcomed war initially as a testing time, as Australia's 'baptism of fire, because it would have a regenerating effect on Australian society, weaning the people from materialism and a love of pleasure'. A cartoon by Norman Lindsay deriding 'slackers' who did not enlist appeared in the secular *Bulletin*; a writer in the *Presbyterian Messenger* suggested that any single, fit young man who had not enlisted was either a shirker or a coward. The pressure on young men was enormous from all sides. No-one thought through the tragedy or consequences of their death or incapacitation. Honour, loyalty were blind passions.

The Church also found a scapegoat; a form of ethnic witch hunt. It singled out German immigrants, arguing that Germans fought on the side of the devil against Christian principles.⁵⁰ In early 1915 an Anglican Synod in Brisbane railed against German preachers in Queensland who 'had expounded "Germanism" and "Kaiserism" from the pulpits for the last seven years' and argued that Germany, using its Pacific dependencies, had planned the annexation of Australia long ago. The Church abandoned any semblance of tolerance for people of German blood.⁵¹ The effects were felt throughout Australia, particularly in areas, like South Australia, with large Lutheran communities, who, ironically, had emigrated to Australia to enjoy religious freedom. The aftermath of changed area and family names lasted well into the post-war period.

The response of the Church to war 'was shallow, emotional and eventually deeply divisive'. The war dragged on. The euphoria did not last. 'The enormous and constant losses' had the predictable effect: 'disputes and bitterness increased ... clergymen, unhappy and frustrated as all ardent loyalists, contributed to this deterioration of spirit'. The divisions came to a head with the attempted introduction of conscription by the Parliament. Suffering losses and running out of volunteers, the Australian Government needed the authority to compel young men to enlist. The Catholic Church, representing the working class, which was the most likely to be hit by conscription, and carrying rancour for injuries received in

⁴⁹Hillard, *City of Churches*, in Dickey (ed), 1992, notes that two of Adelaide's most famous benefactors, Robert Barr Smith and Sir Thomas Elder, were Presbyterians

⁵⁰Barnard, 1963, 73-84

⁵¹Incongruous that the English Royal House was the Royal House of Coburg, with close family connections to Germany. Because of the strong anti-German sentiment it felt compelled to change its name to the 'Royal House of Windsor' - though not until 1917.

Ireland, had strong motives for opposing anything supported by the Anglicans. The referendum on conscription was so narrowly defeated that the country could be said to be divided in half. With prospect of an end to the war, the Government had to turn to other avenues to raise monies and encourage volunteers.

Considering the national pressure to enlist, did Peter Dawson avoid enlisting or was he initially not eligible? At the time war broke out he was considered one of Australia's most high-profile sons, but he was thirty-two years old. It may be argued that he could have volunteered, but he was not in the age-bracket from which volunteers were selected. Whatever he may have thought at the time, the facts show that he continued on tour and returned with his wife to England. He could not have escaped the mood of the conflict, for London was the dynamic centre of the Empire's war effort. It is reasonable to accept that he made whatever contribution was required of him in entertaining the troops and performing for charities and fund-raising concerts⁵², until finally he felt that he 'ought to be doing something more', so 'decided to return to Australia and join the forces.'

This explanation would sound plausible if he were not such a public figure, but squeezing in another South African tour on the way home does not bespeak too great an urgency to join up. He was still 'at sea in Indian Ocean Dec 19th 1917',⁵³ so he reached Australia about Christmas time. As he returned on a troopship in time to undertake a recruiting drive in January, it appears to have been at the invitation of the Australian Government, as an answer to its fractious recruiting problem.⁵⁴ His zealous loyalty, his naive, enthusiastic patriotism, was just what the Government needed for he was still in mufti. By his own account the tour of the back-blocks of Queensland had the desired effect. And then the final effect: Peter Dawson himself, this popular idol, enlisted. But why in Brisbane when his home town was Adelaide, or in the musical centres, Melbourne or Sydney? Because it was the end of the enlistment tour, the culmination of the rabble-rousing!

Whether decided on the tour or pre-planned it smacks of a publicity stunt. The announcement of the enlistment of the thirty-six year old volunteer, 'was received with cheers', then 'he spoke to the crowd and sang', and the citizens of Adelaide, - and probably the rest of the country - were 'proud to know he will help represent them at the front'.⁵⁵

Neither the advantage of the publicity for Peter Dawson nor the advantage of peer assessment in subsequent years can be overlooked. An Australian who did not have a service record was actually at an economic disadvantage. The greatest risk for Peter Dawson was that he would actually serve overseas, though in fairness it must be assumed that he would have acquitted himself as confidently there as in all his undertakings. But that

⁵²a soldier's story Appendix 3

⁵³Peter Dawson manuscript *O my love is like a red, red rose*, poem signed at sea in Indian Ocean Dec 19th 1917 H. M. Transport "Militaides"

⁵⁴hypothesis: no specific Australian Government correspondence could be found by Australian Archives, Canberra

⁵⁵Dawson, 1951, 87 quoting *The Adelaide Herald*

risk must have seemed fairly minimal; the war had dragged on longer than anticipated as it was. Programmes and photographs indicate that he continued to perform until and after he was actually on the Army pay-roll on 1st June.

The suspicion of the publicity value of the undertaking is also heightened by the comparison of his standard story with his army record: No. 65041 Private Peter Smith Dawson.⁵⁶ A 1918 photo does show him in the company of his wife with sergeant's stripes on his sleeve, for he was promoted to 'Acting Sergeant' on 1st July, but he would become Private Peter Dawson again on the troopship.⁵⁷ The sequence is confirmed by his pay allocation, which shows that he was originally paid as 'Private', later as 'Provisional Sergeant', then from 1st November as 'Private' again.⁵⁸

His company 'embarked per s.s. *Carpentaria*' on 7th November. Four days later, on 11th November, the war ended. Almost without notice the German war machine had run out of supplies and collapsed. The dispatch of the troopship had been a pointless exercise; they were 'transhipped to *Riverina*, in New Zealand, on being recalled to Australia upon the signing of the Armistice' and were back in Sydney on 20th November.⁵⁹ A month later, on 28th December, Peter Smith Dawson was 'discharged at Brisbane - termination of period of enlistment'.⁶⁰

Peter Dawson's period of service: six months; officially 'Private', and his troopship got no further than New Zealand. So what was his motivation for the deviations? To tell a tall story is one thing, to act it out seems somewhat reprehensible. Was it a family matter? His elder brother, Thomas, was a lieutenant during the war.⁶¹ Or was he corrupted by his professional stature? Was he such a symbol of Australian achievement that he felt the need for an overt badge of honour and loyalty?

The war affected every Australian of that generation. The Australian soldier was born, and with him, a legend.⁶²

⁵⁶Australian Archives, 1918

⁵⁷Australian Archives, 1933: a report to an Adjutant-General refers to him as Private only. Soldier Career Management Agency (1994, 11.23) explained that he would return to Private when he became part of the greater mass on the troopship.

⁵⁸NSW State Archives: on ship's manifest typed note in r.h. margin 'Acting Sergeant'.

⁵⁹photograph, 1918: on the back of a small snap of Peter Dawson with Nan taken when he returned: 'ss Medic, Quarantine Station, Sydney Harbour 25.11.1918'

⁶⁰Australian Archives, 1918: '28th November' but NSW State Archives ships' manifests: *Riverina* berthed in Sydney on 20.11.1918 'with 14 Officers, 23 Sergeants, 440 Troops (AIF Troops) ex *Carpentaria* from Auckland'. Unless the troops stayed on the ship for a week before disembarking, the dates on the official Army records are incorrect:

1) ss *Carpentaria* left Sydney - for New Zealand, before sailing for London - on 7.11.1918. AWM Embarkation records lists '65041 Private Peter Dawson, Vocalist and Plumber', among the embarking troops. The ship's manifest lists only the crew and 'no passengers'!

on the same day, the *Riverina*, which had arrived in Sydney from Hobart on 4.11.18, sailed for Auckland.

2) the *Riverina* returned to Sydney from Auckland on 20.11.1918

note: photograph, 1918, 11.25, Peter Dawson with Nan, PD hw: 'ss Medic, Quarantine Station, Sydney Harbour 25 November 1918.' The *Medic* arrived on 21 November from Wellington with 'Military Passengers'.

⁶¹family tree, 1996, 01.21: Thomas, 3 years Boer War, Lieutenant in WW1

⁶²Barnard, 1963, 485

The battle honours are not forgotten, but their lasting importance lies in the impact they had on the Australian imagination, and their contribution to the Australian legend. Two chapters of the myth had already been created and absorbed, the bush and its peculiar people, mateship and the religion of mateship. Now came the legend of the soldier.

Unfettered by tradition the Australian soldier showed skills and independence which proved invaluable and earned the respect of other fighting men. Previously unknown, isolated by distance, Australians and New Zealanders had come out of a void, a potent force adding strength to the British Army.

War creates unnatural circumstances, a peculiar monoculture. Returned soldiers glory in the myth. It is exalted by their country. It is an invaluable moral qualification among contemporaries, and a practical qualification too because returning soldiers were given preference for jobs or were allocated parcels of land to farm. But who counted the cost? This population of five million had actually lost 60,000 young men who should have sired the next generation, and had a total casualty list of some 320,000.⁶³

Because of the cataclysmic effect it had on the British Empire and Australians in particular, it is thought-provoking to read that what we refer to as 'World War 1' 'took place in a relatively small area of Europe ... the rest of the world was little affected'.⁶⁴

1919-24: the dazzling heights

Australian leadership during the war had fallen to Billy Hughes, 'Welshman, socialist, ex trade-union secretary, Labour politician, lawyer, an ardent nationalist and imperialist', opposed by a strong anti-war Irish minority led by Archbishop Mannix. The far-seeing Hughes took advantage of the wartime achievement of his small nation by obtaining a seat for Australia first at the post-war Peace Conference and then on the League of Nations.⁶⁵

The return to peace was not easy. The emotional impetus had flagged, but the absorption of the returning forces created a demand for greater services and commodities, which provided full employment and a boost to the economy during the 1920s. Hughes, now regarded as too authoritarian, was replaced by Stanley Bruce, 'a died-in-the-wool Liberal, a Cambridge man with an Australian accent, an athlete, a returned soldier and a business

⁶³Barnard, 1963, 485. ... 'Australian casualties were very high ... the highest casualty rate in the Empire.'

(Australian Archives, 1917, 03.01: The Prime Minister asked the Governor-General of Australia to advise the Governor-General of South Africa by cypher telegram that 'numbers enlisted for service abroad to 31st January last 347,000 or 14 per cent of male population'. [The male population in 1917 was therefore c.2,500,000])

⁶⁴Moss, 1978, 25

⁶⁵Moss, 1978, 294-95 (partly paraphrased): foreign affairs ... continued to be controlled from London until after World War 1. Due largely to the representations of Australian Prime Minister, William Morris ('Billy') Hughes, Britain acknowledged that the war had demonstrated that the Dominions could well run their own foreign affairs. Billy Hughes sought and obtained the participation of Australia in the post-war Peace Conference. From 1919 the Dominions were completely independent, [could] set up their own embassies and had seats on the League of Nations.

man', who held onto the reins until 1929 and carried through the plans for independence started by Hughes.

Peter Dawson and his wife organised their return to London as soon as the war had ended,. By the end of 1919 he was reinstated in the Gramophone Company's good books with a 'new and exclusive agreement'.⁶⁶ There was a slight hiatus while he and Nan and other supporting artists toured India and Ceylon from circa January to June 1921. Allowing for preparation and travel time, he and Nan were back in London by September, when he signed another contract for three years.

These three years, 1922, 1923, 1924, appear to follow the usual mix of recordings, concerts and other engagements, except that in 1922 a new player entered the entertainment industry in England: the British Broadcasting Company. Radio made house music, ballad concerts and the industry which supported them redundant⁶⁷ and dramatically altered the economics of the recording industry. Gradually, radio also became part of the repertoire of Peter Dawson's engagements. His first was as one of a group of Australian artists, who broadcast from Australia House in the Strand to Australia on Australia Day, 26th January 1923,⁶⁸ no doubt to demonstrate the wonder of this new method of immediate contact with the other side of the world, and also to demonstrate Australia's national pride in the achievements of its own London-based musicians.

By 1923 the phonograph boom in America began to decline; one company, Columbia eventually went into receivership. In England, Compton Mackenzie began publication of *The Gramophone*, a magazine which carried information about all aspects of the recording industry, including many perceptive reviews of the quality of recordings as they appeared on the market.

1925-32: royalties begin

Experiments in a system of recording electrically, extant since 1919, were perfected by Bell Laboratories (Western Electric) in 1924. Understanding its import the phonograph industry began using the system from 1925.⁶⁹ Electrical recording changed the character of the recording industry. Because the improved reproduction technique would allow greater numbers of discs of better quality to be stamped from each master, it became necessary for evolve a system of payment, which provided a fair and reasonable return to the performers of a work. When Peter Dawson's exclusive contract was renewed for another five years from 9th September, 1925,⁷⁰ an income from 'Royalties' was defined. This period, the latter half of the twenties and into the early thirties, was undoubtably the boom period for Peter Dawson. Some sources⁷¹ report that he re-recorded all his old songs in 1923 onto the

⁶⁶EMI, 1920, *The Voice*, Vol 4, No.3

⁶⁷see Chapter 4: Concerts; Chapter 5 Broadcasting

⁶⁸BBC 26.1.23

⁶⁹Brisbane (ed), 1991, 201: Recording with a microphone began to replace the acoustical process in 1925. see also Chapter 3: Recording

⁷⁰EMI, 1925, 11.11

⁷¹newspaper biography after his death, 1962, 12.26; newspaper, 1991, 08.23

new electrical '78s with an attendant boost to his income, but it should be 1925, for that was the year the electrical process was introduced.

In 1925, at the height of his fame, domestic tragedy struck. One of the material benefits of his economic status was a modern motor car. Travelling with his wife to a concert engagement he collided with another vehicle. In the accident Nan was so badly injured that she never completely recovered⁷². She stopped singing, contenting herself by being Peter Dawson's adviser and constant companion.

The pattern of concerts and recordings continued throughout the prosperous pre-Depression years and even by 1930, when the Depression was biting, his professional life seemed to remain unaffected. There are signs that he sought to improve the quality of his repertoire, possibly to raise his status in the eyes of the establishment or possibly just to hone his professional techniques, when he gave Wigmore/Aeolian Hall lieder recitals with the young Gerald Moore in 1924 and again in 1928. Though reviews were laudatory in both cases, Peter Dawson concluded that lieder recitals were not commercially viable;⁷³ nevertheless, the new material enriched his vocal vocabulary as it found its way into his concert repertoire, and BBC broadcasts.

The post-war boom years were beginning to flag. The impact of radio in America caused RCA to buy Victor and convert the majority of Victor plant from gramophones to radio production in 1929. Edison discontinued the manufacture of phonographs and records. In October the Depression began with the financial crash on Wall Street. Like every manufacturing business, the phonograph and record business dwindled precariously in the USA. In March 1931, as a result of depressed conditions in the European market, The Gramophone Company and its competitor, Columbia Graphophone Company, merged to form Electric and Musical Industries Ltd.⁷⁴

Until then Peter Dawson had only made a limited number of broadcasts for the BBC but a more regular pattern of recitals began from 1930, when the BBC picked up his performances at the Palladium. The famous Music Hall in central London seems an unexpected venue for a classical singer, but, on the crest of his wave of popularity, Peter Dawson could draw a crowd anywhere.

The Imperial Conference of 1926 defined the autonomy of Dominions within the British Empire, that is, equality of status, united by a common allegiance to the Crown. The Dominions would appoint High Commissioners, and governors-general would be appointed on their advice. These recommendations became law when the Statute of Westminster was passed in 1931,⁷⁵ although the statute was not actually ratified by Australia until 1942, which may help to explain why many Australians assume that the narrow ties of Federation Australia to England still exist. But already, by the end of World War 1, there was political logic in England giving Australia its freedom. The golden days of Britain's maritime power in the

⁷²see Chapter 3

⁷³ newspaper, 1991, 08.23

⁷⁴EMI, often named by its principal recording label: *His Masters Voice*.

⁷⁵Moss, 1978, 294-5; Barnard 543 'gave legal form to the Balfour Declaration of 1926'.

time of Queen Victoria had been fragmented by rivals. The Empire's monopoly had been broken. War meant reparation. Crown Colonies, directly responsible to London, were more profitable than Dominions and keeping the connection from one pole to the other was impractical. In effect, ties with England were finally cut with the passing of the 1931 Statute. Like the rest of the world, the universal fall in commodity prices in 1929 caught Australia off guard. The optimistic post-war recovery period had depended on excessive borrowings, which could not be sustained when prices fell. 'Australia was one of the first countries to succumb to the depression and one of the first to emerge from it'.⁷⁶ By 1932 unemployment was still acute but the share market was rallying.⁷⁷

Ignoring minor hiccups, it could be said - and the Gramophone Company did say it - that by 1931 Peter Dawson had had contracts with the Gramophone Company for 25 years. He was also being touted as 'the most recorded artist' and sales figures in the millions were bandied about. His fame was at its zenith. To exploit his popularity, the Australian entrepreneur Hugo Larsen organised what was arguably Peter Dawson's most successful tour to Australia and New Zealand. Because of constant demand in England, Peter Dawson had not toured Australia since the War. His gramophone recordings were in high demand; the realistic EMI, nee Gramophone Company, could see the benefit to Australian sales clearly, so it also promoted the tour with retail advertising, programme advertising and newspaper publicity. The tour was shared with his next nearest competitor in the longest-service stakes, the high-profile classical pianist, Mark Hambourg, who had played Beethoven in a film. To celebrate their achievements for the industry and to wish them *Bon Voyage* the Gramophone Company arranged a large farewell luncheon for both of them at the Savoy on 19th March, 1931. *The Voice*⁷⁸ reported that they were undertaking a 'five months trip' but remarks on a menu indicate that Peter Dawson expected to be away from April until November.⁷⁹

Although the Depression was at its height it made no difference to this tour. Both Peter Dawson and Mark Hambourg were famous names. Peter Dawson had always been featured on the less expensive labels, those favoured by the general public, so the advent of their 'pop star' attracted a broad-spectrum audience. Peter Dawson was as successful on 'tour' as on record. It is most interesting to observe that he did not simply deliver his popular material; on the contrary, all his programmes were based on music of the highest quality: baroque arias, oratorio, lieder; the 'popular' ballads were seldom named, and if so, only in the last bracket, the 'light' bracket with which concert artists tend to conclude. But the songs that sold, the songs most often broadcast, were not forgotten: notes on programmes and reviewers reports indicate that Peter Dawson was exceptionally generous with the well known numbers - as encores!⁸⁰ After singing an extra last

⁷⁶Barnard, 1963, 534

⁷⁷Barnard, 1963, 542

⁷⁸EMI, 1931, Vol, 15, No.4

⁷⁹ menu, 1931, 03.27

⁸⁰programme 1931, 06.06: encores pencilled in by a listener end 1st half and after final bracket; Burnard, 1931, 10.04: review of 1st Perth concert

concert 'by demand' in Perth on 31st October 1931 the artists returned directly to England, so they would have been home for Christmas. The tour had been a success artistically and financially.

1933-1939: the first cracks appear

After the 1931 tour the old pattern appears to have followed in 1932. At the beginning of 1933 a BBC recital contained the first performance of one of his own compositions, *Westward Ho!*, written under his favourite pseudonym, J. P. McCall.⁸¹ He shared the recital with 'The Celebrated Chilean Pianist' Tapia-Caballero. At fifty-one, in his prime, Peter Dawson was persuaded by the Australian impresarios, the Tait Brothers, to tour Australasia again. Could he risk another tour so close to the 1931 tour? Was the Depression affecting engagements in Britain? The Tait's were an excellent and experienced management team⁸² so Peter Dawson could have reasonably expected to repeat the success of 1931. He signed the contract in January⁸³ and the concert tour began in New Zealand in April.

Barnard may believe that 'in 1931 Australia was one of the first countries to emerge from the Depression':⁸⁴ others (Moss) that the Depression came to an end around 1932/33, but the effects of the Depression were still omnipresent; they remained in the minds of those who had experienced it for the rest of their lives. Did the mood of the Depression affect the audience? Was the young pianist as much a drawcard as the inimitable Mark Hambourg? A feeling of personal dissatisfaction came through as the contract ended in Melbourne; much to their surprise and disappointment,⁸⁵ Peter Dawson abruptly advised the Tait's that he had fulfilled their terms and would not extend.⁸⁶

Although Peter Dawson later spoke of the success of the tour,⁸⁷ other sources suggest it did not compare with the 1931 tour. Peter Dawson sought an excuse in the effect of radio coupled with the downturn in business activity; but these were merely outward signs. It will be argued that sales of Peter Dawson records were declining due to the changing tastes in popular music;⁸⁸ that, as the power of the British Empire declined, the power of the USA, isolated from the competition among European nations, grew, and with it the spread of its culture; that popular American music, with its pervasive negro rhythms, invaded Europe and replaced the musical voice of Empire, those English ballads with which Peter Dawson's name was so closely associated.

As the HMV catalogue 1934/35 still carried circa 200 titles under his name,⁸⁹ Peter Dawson returned to London oblivious to this foreign ground-swell,

⁸¹manuscripts are sometimes signed J. Petter McCall but compositions are published as J. P. McCall

⁸²The Tait's Bros, trading as J. C. Williamson, were Australia's major entrepreneurs. They had organised the Amy Castles' tour of 1909,

⁸³Tait, 1933, 01.24

⁸⁴Barnard, 1963, 534

⁸⁵Kingston, 1933, 08.17

⁸⁶Dawson, 1933, 08.16

⁸⁷Dawson, 1933, 11.06 to Leslie Boosey

⁸⁸EMI, 1933, 11.18

⁸⁹EMI, 1934: HMV catalogue 1934/35, 97-98

but the financial controllers at the Gramophone Company were more realistic. They proved to the Board that royalty losses had been accumulating under his contract for some time,⁹⁰ so to his surprise and chagrin the next three-year contract was offered at a dramatically reduced rate. Peter Dawson grudgingly signed, albeit for only two years.⁹¹

Though changing tastes affected his recording contracts, his concert performances were still viable. Early in 1935 he toured South Africa, but not Australia as he claims.⁹² In May he was busy during George V 25th Anniversary celebrations, EMI records suggest that he took part in the *Radio Exhibition* in July, in September he sang at the Proms. He also signed another two-year contract with the Gramophone Company.

The Depression had drawn an economic line in the sand. The world had stopped purchasing; industry had failed. When the world slowly began to recover, as it slowly mended its social and financial fabric, it longed for something new. Peter Dawson became a member of the Conservative Party's Primrose League Executive in 1935,⁹³ yet he expressed the opinion that 'singers must always remain non-political'.⁹⁴ He certainly remained on the side of the conservative status quo, but this appointment most likely demonstrates that he was pleased with his social achievement rather than political activity, for he liked to publicise his association with political leaders, even Royalty, who were admirers of his professional status.

Peter Dawson was no longer young; for the older generation he represented the best of the past, for the 'modern' generation he was an anachronism. The old political regime died with the death of George V on 20th January 1936. Royalty played musical chairs: Edward VIII succeeded from 20th January until 11th December, but the crown seemed less important than his love for Mrs Wallis Simpson. He abdicated; which forced his quiet brother, George VI, to assume the responsibilities of the House of Windsor and face the mounting turmoil in Europe.

During 1936 a detailed personal 'Log Book' indicates that Peter Dawson and Nan took time out for an extensive mid-year car tour of England and Scotland, while other sources indicate that he also continued to fulfil concert and broadcasting commitments. With the value of his EMI contract reduced Peter Dawson needed to look for new outlets to capitalise on his public profile. He had already dabbled in a Scout film in 1930; in January 1937 he took part in a film, *O-Kay for Sound*,⁹⁵ with a group of nutty comedians, including Flanagan & Allen, who he knew from his Palladium performances. On 4th September, 1936 he took part in the original BBC television test broadcast at 'Radiolympia'.⁹⁶ However, an attempt to enter the American touring market proved abortive despite recommendations by

⁹⁰EMI, 1933, 11.07

⁹¹EMI, 1933, 12.14

⁹²newspaper, 1939, 03.31: *Peter Dawson booked for Australian tour ... 'last here in 1933'*. 1935 tour reported in McMenamin, J & J, in *Phonographic News*, 1975, 1/4, 42-53 is taken from Dawson, 1951, 98, which also says he toured Australia in 1948/49. Explanation 1948/49 in Chapter 5 Broadcasting, ABC.

⁹³Primrose League, 1935, 05.08, Peter Dawson co-opted as member of Grand Council

⁹⁴Dawson, hw, 1946:

⁹⁵EMI, 1937, 01.14

⁹⁶BBC, 1936. 08.26

his principals at the Gramophone Company over a many months. Whether his style of music would have been attractive in his hey-day is a matter of conjecture, but by then he held no interest at all for American entrepreneurs.

Despite the goodwill which existed between himself and the Company, the Company was a hard-nosed pragmatist. Arguments arose when his contract came up for renewal in September 1937 and were not resolved until he accepted a contract reduced to a miserable 'not less than 20 titles' on 27th January 1938, at about the same time as the tax inspectors won a case against him for £1500.⁹⁷

From the peak in 1933 the Gramophone Company contracts had been reduced further and further until the 1939 contract was down to 'not less than 12 titles', which was really a euphemism for 'no more than 12 titles', because the Company could not even recover its sales guarantee. The myth, 'continuous recording contracts for 35 years', could be publicised but the reality must have been depressing to the artist. BBC radio provided no more than three or four engagements a year, although his victory in the fight for a percentage royalty of records broadcast returned some income.

No doubt seeking an improvement in his fortunes, the 57-year old decided to return to Australia again in 1939, but the Australian Broadcasting Commission, by then a major international entrepreneur,⁹⁸ was no more interested than the Americans. Good fortune came from an unlikely quarter, Greater Union Theatres, a cinema chain, which offered him an eighteen-week spot in its entertainment section. To ensure that only Greater Union Theatres had the benefit of his name, he was contracted to them exclusively and obliged to leave the country immediately on conclusion of the tour in October⁹⁹.

1939-47: that damn war again

In World War 1 Germany was supposed to have been defeated. Its royal house no longer existed. The new democratic parliamentary system had been as helpless as other countries to handle the Depression. As a result Germany produced a leader from the masses,¹⁰⁰ who controlled them at first by provided economic recovery through constructive political programmes. With political success came adulation, with adulation much greater power, with power control over opposing factions by violence, a build-up of military might and the appeal to the nation to regain the territory robbed from the nation by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. England and its allies observed the growth of political strength in Germany - and Italy - but as the concept of another major war was so abhorrent, they persuaded themselves that the balance of power was not threatened. Germany exposed its hand by marching into Poland in September 1939. Within twenty-five years another conflagration in Europe!

So it seemed that no sooner had the world recovered from the Depression

⁹⁷London newspaper, 1938, 11.10: *Peter Dawson must pay tax on £1500* (in 1996 terms: £15210)

⁹⁸see Chapter 5, Broadcasting: ABC. Newspaper, 1939, 06.04: 'originally intended to visit Australia under the auspices of the Broadcasting Commission'

⁹⁹newspaper, 1939, 05.29; newspaper, 1939, 06.04; programme, 1939, 06.00

¹⁰⁰Italy also for the same reasons

than it was at war again. In Australia for most of the 1930s Joseph Lyons, 'a man of integrity but no great brilliance ... sympathetic to the electorate, a safe man ...' had led a United Australia Party government. Lyons died in office in 1939 and an 'unwilling Menzies (was) elected on 26th April 1939'. It fell to Menzies to declare war on 3rd September. 'With him it was axiomatic that if the United Kingdom went to war Australia went with her'¹⁰¹ and the majority of Australians, still with their heads in the sands of Empire, agreed. Menzies resigned in August 1941 and it was left to Labour legend, John Curtin, to lead Australia through those troubled times.

Peter Dawson was supposed to return to England but the declaration of war made it impossible. He and Nan were stranded in Australia again. As in World War 1, they were cut off from any assets in England. The Dawson family firm, which had moved to Camperdown in Sydney about 1920,¹⁰² came to the rescue. Peter Dawson wrote to a friend in October 1939 that he had been 'included on the Board of Directors of Messrs T. Dawson & Sons Pty Ltd. Canister & Drum manufacturing'. Like most Australians, he did not understand the severity of the times ahead for he imagined that 'as soon as a favourable opportunity arises I am hopping back to London to gather up my goods & chattels'. That favourable opportunity was eight years away.

This war probably affected the lives of every Australian more than World War 1, because many more women 'entered fields where they had never been before', particularly in essential wartime work, such as machine operators in munitions and aircraft factories. The 2nd AIF were volunteers, but every other physically and mentally fit adult up to forty-five years of age had to register and work in some capacity. Looking after their young families was considered essential war work for mothers, but many men and women of retiring age worked on:¹⁰³

The magnitude of the war effort can only be realised when all the other activities directly or indirectly bearing on the war are added to the armed services. Every type of munition, except tanks, was produced in Australia. Much had never been done before ... workshops were in effect laboratories in control of scientists. Good profits were made, high wages paid and the Government won back good percentage in taxation. Money flowed through the hands of the people but there was nothing to spend it on because all luxury trades closed down.

Petrol was already rationed in 1939, and from 1942 coupons were issued for clothing and a number of basic foods. Building, other than for war purposes, was forbidden. The national broadcasting stations battered listeners continually with propaganda. And this frenetic atmosphere was exacerbated by the arrival of the better paid American soldier.

Peter Dawson's change of circumstance when war broke out made it

¹⁰¹based on Barnard, 1963, , 565

¹⁰²biography, family tree, 1996, 01.21: Soon after Thomas died (1919) the sons shifted the business to Camperdown, near Sydney, where the business was still called T. Dawson & Sons. The name is still decipherable today (1996). Except for James, who died in 1912, and Peter, who went overseas, all the sons (ie Thomas, David, William) moved to NSW.

¹⁰³Barnard, 1963, , 570

appropriate to announce his retirement from singing. A London paper¹⁰⁴ reported 'from Brisbane, Australia' that *Peter Dawson is Retiring*. "It does not mean that I am giving up singing," he said. "My voice might still do a bit of good for charities." And that is what it did. His 'work' at the factory appears to have been a sinecure, an anchor. In an interview¹⁰⁵ Peter Dawson refers to his job 'as part of his effort to help industry'. 'On another occasion he calls himself 'No. 1 Handshake' so he must have drummed up sales for the family business. Yet his major contribution appears to have been keen patriotic activity, reflected in 'a new National Anthem', his own composition, *Australia*, which was premiered with the NSW Police Choir as chorus in 1940.

With their orientation towards Europe Australians had seen the war as essentially another war between Britain and Germany. With this orientation toward Europe no-one showed any concern for the Japanese, who were already aggressors in China. But successful aggression breeds further aggression. Japan believed it could extend its Empire through the Pacific. Considering America too weak to fight battles on two fronts the Japanese struck the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in December 1941. Suddenly the European front was forgotten; Australia itself was under threat. Fortunately, the attack on American soil had mobilised 'an ally with untapped potential and the greatest standing resources in men and material in the world.' American declared war on all Axis powers and looked to Australia as a major Pacific base. Frank and realistic, John Curtin, re-directed the focus of the nation 'Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links of kinship with the United Kingdom'.¹⁰⁶

There was still power in the name Peter Dawson: as part of the War Effort it could be used for rallying soldiers, or raising funds, or entertaining the troops.¹⁰⁷ Peter Dawson was a passionate imperialist; a purveyor of 'patriotic sentiment ... so vigorous that it aroused the anger of pacifists and others'.¹⁰⁸ In 1942 the New Zealand Government used him to successfully raise a £15 million War Loan within three weeks. By 1943, the ABC, which had ignored him in 1939, was using him regularly on radio.¹⁰⁹

When victory was achieved in Europe on 8 May 1945, attention focussed completely on the Pacific. Japan was being repulsed but was still obstinately entrenched in the islands, so America brought the war to an abrupt halt by hitting Hiroshima with the first atom bomb on 6th August.

The war ended on 15 August 1945. Peter Dawson promptly forgot that he was sixty-three, forgot that he had retired: his thoughts, and Nan's, turned again to England and the possibility of renewing the old life.

¹⁰⁴newspaper, 1939,10.30

¹⁰⁵newspaper, 1951, 04.25

¹⁰⁶Barnard, 1963, , 558

¹⁰⁷Colombo newspaper,1947, 08.05: 'Throughout the war he sang at concerts for the troops in all parts of Australia and at the sales of war-bonds both in Australia and New Zealand.'

¹⁰⁸newspaper, 1951, 04.25

¹⁰⁹ABC radio newspaper, 1943, 05.22

1947-56: the sunset of a glorious career

The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was a cataclysm which changed the world. Like Damocles' sword, fear of a nuclear holocaust hangs over the world, has become a background, a constant threat to what seems like a fragile peace. When the dust had settled, England, which was still recovering from World War 1 and the Depression when it was engulfed in World War 2, had used up most of its resources, including its tenuous hold on the Empire. Commonwealth countries, not bound by Anglo-Saxon ties, began to seek independence. The first was India; on 21st June 1948 it became independent and in August became a republic. Unwilling to acknowledge the basic tenet that all Commonwealth countries were equal regardless of colour or creed, South Africa stuck to apartheid and resigned from the Commonwealth, while those smaller colonies which could support themselves gradually broke away too.

It took a long time for England to swing back into peace mode. Destruction had been horrific: rebuilding was urgent. Germany, whose industries had been razed, received American loans for the most modern machinery and in a surprisingly short time rose to become a leading industrial power once more. England's industries, still relatively intact, struggled on with the baggage of the past, while the USA, by providing much of the capital for reconstruction, strengthened its grip on world economic power. American troops, who had been actively involved in the major battle areas of both Europe and the Pacific, gave new impetus to the spread of American culture and its capitalist philosophy.

John Curtin died in office. He was succeeded by Ben Chifley. But the pattern of the first World War repeated itself: the wartime leaders were considered autocratic; they were replaced by failed arch-Liberal, Robert Gordon Menzies, who retained power until 1966, becoming Australia's longest serving Prime Minister. Like Peter Dawson, Menzies belonged unequivocally to the old Imperialist school.¹¹⁰ In face of the reality of the shift of world power away from Britain to America, and the growing need of a role for Australia in Asia and the Pacific, he would have reunited Australia to Britain if he could.

Surprisingly perhaps, there was still enough magic in the name 'Peter Dawson' for the English impresario, Harold Fielding, to organise an extraordinarily extended tour of the English provinces in 1947. The sixty-five year old was 'to sing 140 concerts in a year here, which means ... singing on average once every 56 hours'.¹¹¹ To show its continuing goodwill the practical Gramophone Company offered Peter Dawson a contract for 'not less than 6 record sides' and, at the end of his tour, invited him to a *bon voyage* luncheon at the Savoy.¹¹²

This tour and ancillary engagements kept Peter Dawson in England until

¹¹⁰Peter Dawson sang at the State Banquet for the first visit of Queen Elizabeth at Parliament House, Canberra on 16 February 1954: Menzies' printed *Presentation* speech begins: 'before the vocal period of this dinner comes to an end'. The *Toast* refers to the Queen in par 1 as: 'Queen Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Australia, and her other realms and territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.'

¹¹¹newspaper, 1947, 08.26

¹¹²EMI, 1948, 12.00; NFSA: MS5030: the card with 65 - often illegible - signatures

the end of 1948. By the beginning of 1949 he had returned to Australia under contract to the ABC for 'a long tour' that began 'in Sydney February 7'¹¹³ and took him through the country and across to New Zealand again. As accompanist the ABC had employed the young winner of its national concerto competition, Geoffrey Parsons, who followed Peter Dawson back to London at the end of the tour in 1950,¹¹⁴ for, in true Melba style, Peter Dawson set out for yet another '60-concert tour' of England.

Hampered with its concept that increasing age equals diminishing abilities the media was surprised and impressed by Peter Dawson's active programme:¹¹⁵

Peter Dawson At 69 To Travel The Road Again¹¹⁶

At 69, Peter Dawson ("A Gipsy am I") is to travel the road again. After 50 years as a concert singer, he says: "I am so near broke that I cannot afford to do anything else"

Experimenting with his name tied to two modern ballads, the Gramophone Company engaged him again for 'two named titles', while the 'retiree' enjoyed a veritable renaissance at the BBC. Among others contracts, there were eleven weekly programmes under the title, *Rainbow Room*, between February - May. Between August - October Peter Dawson pre-recorded ten programmes¹¹⁷ covering the five decades of his career, under the title, *Fifty Years of Song*, which were broadcast the following year, 1951, during the *Festival of Britain*, when his eponymous autobiography was also published. Leaving this legacy in England he returned to Sydney by the end of 1950. In 1951, Constance Bedford Noble, Nan's youngest sister, arrived to help care for Peter Dawson's ailing wife.

On 6 February 1952, after a reign of 16 years, George VI died. As King, he had hoped to see Britain rejuvenated after the Depression, but had only seen war and the disintegration of the Empire. Because of his symbolic association with the War the aftermath seemed to die with him. Although the rebuilding process was not yet fully complete, a mood of hope for continued peace and prosperity became vested in his daughter Elizabeth II, as she accepted orb and sceptre.

At the end of 1952 Nan's health worsened and on 31st January 1953, Peter Dawson's 71st birthday, she died. As Nan's health declined his own must have shown the wear and tear of a seventy year-old, who had been actively touring most of his life, yet between 1951 and the end of 1954 he toured for the ABC several times - mostly to those provincial towns he had refused to visit in 1939! - and could often be heard on ABC radio. Though his record sales had 'practically dried up'¹¹⁸ his popular ballads were still broadcast, even on commercial channels.

When Nan died Con did not return to England but remained to look after

¹¹³newspaper, 1949, 02.05

¹¹⁴and remained to develop his own international career

¹¹⁵London newspaper 1950, 03.27

¹¹⁶play on the Peter Dawson recording 'I Travel the Road, who cares' which begins 'A Gipsy am I'

¹¹⁷of five songs each

¹¹⁸ newspaper biography, 1962, 01.04

Peter Dawson. The following year, 30th April, 1954 the couple married, although the big London press announcement was saved for yet another farewell provincial tour of England in early 1955. That he was still in good broadcasting voice is evidenced by further BBC radio engagements, appearances on television,¹¹⁹ and yet another Gramophone Company contract for 'two named titles'.

1956-1961: the closing years

This was to be his last 'last visit' to England: the 1955 recording contract ending his long association with The Gramophone Company: fifty-one years, the stuff of true legends. The frailties of age were apparently manifesting themselves as English friend, James Tierney¹²⁰ writes: 'My dear Pete ... hoping Con is now better and your asthma easier', and according to a Sydney newspaper biography¹²¹ headed *The enduring Peter Dawson*: 'at 74 on medical orders gave up singing, (and) occupied (himself) with his life-long hobby of painting'. That would have been 1956; theoretically he might have given up singing but comments from correspondents,¹²² supported by the evidence of Peter Dawson's Bank Pay-in Slips for ABC programmes, indicate that he was still singing occasionally for the ABC into 1959.

In 1956 the Suez War had closed the Canal, so ships to England had to sail some six weeks around the Cape of Good Hope, not much quicker than Peter Dawson's original journey in 1902.¹²³ Young Australian musicians, in search of the world careers still sailed to England. Though aeroplanes could connect one side of the world with the other within 36 hours, the day of air-travel as the favoured international carrier was yet to come.

Within the next five years the changing nature of the Commonwealth led to an influx of immigrants with right of entry to Britain from the emerging independent nations. The British Government decided to stem the flow by removing this automatic right of entry from all Commonwealth countries and limiting the length of stay. This impacted on Australians, who now entered Britain as foreigners.¹²⁴ Peter Dawson, loyal imperialist, did not have to suffer that indignity.

Towards the end of 1959 Peter Dawson and Constance moved briefly to Adelaide but returned to Sydney early the next year. According to Vose¹²⁵

¹¹⁹London newspaper, 1955, 04.26

¹²⁰Tierney, 1955, 07.29

¹²¹newspaper, 1991, 08.23

¹²²Kerville, 1958, 07.28: 'hearing you sing this am.'; 'was very interested in that show on TV showing the progress in broadcasting during the last 25 years. I thought you sang beautifully' Lilley, 1959, 08.12: 'heard (ABC) session Saturday 12th'

Robbie, 1959, 06.16: 'listening to "Argonauts" session (ABC radio) and your voice comes over at least twice a week, to remind us of old times.'

Robbie, 1959, 06.28: 'I heard you singing your "Argonauts" bit today'

¹²³Victorian State Archives, 1902, 03.29, verbal information: Steamships had increased speed from 15 knots in 1902 to about 20 knots. The journey had been reduced from 50 days to 32 through Suez or 38 around Capetown, i.e. from 7 weeks to $4\frac{1}{2}$ or $5\frac{1}{2}$.

¹²⁴even though Australian passports were slow to lose the tag 'British Subject, Australian Citizen'. After Menzies the order was changed to 'Australian Citizen, British Subject', but 'Australia' did not appear in solitary splendour until the time of Whitlam.

¹²⁵Vose, 1987, 134

'The last programme I know of took place on 23 May 1961'.¹²⁶ Towards the end of the year, on 20 September, newspapers reported¹²⁷ that he was in 'a private hospital' with 'a malignant growth'; he died in Sydney on 27 September at the age of seventy-nine, or as he, with his feeling for a good punchline would have preferred, 'in his eightieth year'.

¹²⁶AA/ABC (Spoken Archives), 1961, 05.29 advised that 'programme about Nellie Melba in which Peter Dawson and others reminiscence about the great diva is dated 19th May 1961'.

¹²⁷Hobart newspaper, 1961, 09.20, *The Mercury*.

Chapter 2

The Early Years

The study of any successful career raises questions about the environment in which the seeds of personality and career orientation were sown. A preliminary profile of his background until his marriage - which coincided with the beginning of his professional career - may help with an understanding of significant areas of Peter Dawson's professional achievement.

Until attention was focussed on his vocal abilities in his late teens, Peter Dawson believed that he was destined to inherit his father's iron-working business and the style of life he was accustomed in the city of his birth; but from the time he started singing this age of innocence was gone. Once he had completely embraced the intense discipline and complete dedication required to become a professional singer, his life was transformed.

the formative years

Long before his professional potential was recognised his character and personality were being formed. Whatever Peter Dawson became, he was a product of an environment and a generation which could never be replicated: a first generation Australian, born at the turn of the century, a family of Scottish immigrants, a 'city' no bigger than a large country town. Peter Dawson grew up in one of the Australian colonies, which were firmly wedded to the British Empire. At that time Australianism was at best a colonial inflection; these colonials were firmly tied to the umbilical cord of England, and in Peter Dawson's case, of Scotland too. They were British. England, not Australia, was 'the Motherland'. Loyalty to the Crown was explicit in their National Anthem and their prayers. There was never a question of throwing off the shackles of Empire. Much later they became proudly 'Australian', consciously or unconsciously out to contradict the 'nothing made in Australia was as good as similar articles made overseas'¹ attitude, which applied to all aspects of colonial life, including the Arts.

If Peter Dawson had not become famous information about his family would not have become important, but seekers after clues to his fame have searched into their hero's childhood in the hope of sourcing some pattern to the vagaries of the gods. When Nellie Melba jibed at Peter Dawson² "Adelaide! that town of parsons, pubs, and prostitutes!" she was a colonial diva from colonial Victoria allowing herself a caustic colonial joke, for there was no lack of animosity between one State and another. As early as 1872 Anthony Trollope had referred to Adelaide as 'the city of churches' though another source advises that they bore 'a very small proportion to the public-houses',³ for, in the last decades of the nineteenth century Adelaide was still more like a frontier town, with the rough hostelrys catering for itinerant labourers, seamen, cattlemen and immigrants, pitted against the settler

¹Splatt & Bruce, *Australian Landscape Painting*, 1981, 5 still refer to it.

²Melba, born 1861 in Melbourne as Helen Mitchell was 21 years older than Peter Dawson when they met in 1905. Full story in Chapter 3.

³Hillard, 'The City of Churches', p.61, in Dickey (Ed), 1992, *William Shakespeare's Adelaide 1860-1930*

families trying to build a new home, a more prosperous future while protect their religious freedoms.⁴

Peter Dawson was born into a Presbyterian family on 31st January 1882, the fourth son and the second youngest of nine children.⁵ Although 31st January 1882 is the standard date used in biographies there must have been some doubt in the family about its accuracy for his youngest sister, Jessie, wrote to him about it as late as 30 October 1960,⁶ after he had returned to Sydney again following a last, abortive move to Adelaide.⁷ The birth certificate, corrected in 1901,⁸ indicates that Peter Dawson and the family could have believed that he was born in 1881. Had he been a year older then the beginnings of his vocal maturity would fit more comfortably; against this, it seems rather careless to register a child more than a year after its birth.

The birth certificate shows that his father was 'Thomas Dawson, Iron Worker', his mother 'Alison Dawson, formerly Miller'. By the time the birth certificate was corrected the family had moved several times, but it shows that Peter Dawson was born at Cassel St, Adelaide. A 'family tree'⁹ prepared by Peter Dawson's niece,¹⁰ reveals that Peter Dawson's ancestors were mostly Scottish artisans, although one branch took to the sea. Peter Dawson's father,¹¹ born in Kirkcaldy, has been described as dour¹²; he must have been a strong-willed boy for he ran away to sea 'at about age 12 and remained an ordinary seaman for seven years'. He arrived in Adelaide aboard the *Alchemist*, in 1860, and settled there. He started a plumbing business which became 'T. Dawson & Sons, Plumber, Gasfitter, Tank and Cannister Maker', first in Weymouth Street then, about 1899, as larger premises were needed, it moved to Gilbert Street. The business must have thrived, for as each of the four sons left school he went into the business.

Alison Dawson, née Miller,¹³ who had come to Adelaide in the *Morning Star* 15.2.1863, must have been from Scottish farming stock for she and Thomas had married at Mt. Lofty, 'where farmers from Scotland had clustered',¹⁴ on 5th November 1867. The first son, James, was born in 1868.

Where exactly was Peter Dawson born?. The question has obviously

⁴based on Dickey, (Ed), 1992, 1. *William Shakespeare's Adelaide 1860-1930*, 6. Painter, *Hotels and Drinking*, 7. Riddle, *Adelaide's Parklands*

⁵biography, Alison Mullins' family tree, 1996, 01.21

⁶Jessie, 1960,10.30. As his sister wrote about it only a year before he died there must have been still some lack of clarity in Peter Dawson's own mind.

⁷Jessie, 1960,10.30: 'My dear Peter & Connie', - thanks for telegram for 77th birthday - fancy us two lingering on and all our dear ones gone "on" before'

⁸biography, 1882, 01.31: Certified copy of Registration of Birth, Book 79, No 88, 1882, District of Adelaide, 321 Correction of Entry: When Born Jan 31st, 1882 Correction entered this 5th day of December 1901

⁹biography, 1996, 01.21 - unless otherwise noted, family information based on this document.

¹⁰biography, 1996, 01.21: Alison Julia Mullins, daughter of Jessie

¹¹biography, 1996, 01.21: 20.9.1842-10.11.1919

¹²EMI, 1931, 04.00

¹³biography, 1996, 01.21: 19.6.1841-30.3.1916. did Jessie remember the date as 31.03.1917? Jessie, 1961,03.31: 'My dears Peter & Connie ... mother died March 31 44 years ago'

¹⁴Richards, 1986, 203-4

occupied biographers - and the family too apparently. In 1982 Seidner¹⁵ writes: 'Erroneous information has been passed around the trade in recent months about Dawson being born anywhere from Norwood to St Peter's.' The source of the confusion surely stems from Peter Dawson himself,¹⁶ who 'hates "swank" and calls the place where he was born East Adelaide¹⁷ and not St. Peters, which, according to him, is a title given it by snobs'. This subtle difference was echoed in a Real Estate advertisement in 1989:¹⁸

Famous Singer's Victorian house for sale
An old shop facade near 6 Fifth Ave, St Peters, has faded letters which read "East Adelaide". The five children, Thomas, David, William, Peter and Elsie¹⁹ Dawson who lived across the road at No. 6, all went to the East Adelaide School. One of these children, Peter Dawson, who became a great basso profundo, never forgot that he came from East Adelaide, and once said, "Only snobs call it St. Peters".

Even in the last years of Peter Dawson's life his younger sister, Jessie, felt prompted to clear up any misconception:²⁰

I possess your birth-certificate & you were born in the South East of the City of Adelaide, Peter. I suppose 80 years ago Castle St was out in the never never so this information²¹ will dispell (sic) any idea you may have entertained that you were born at St Peters.

The snobbery ploy is indicative both of the vagueness of childhood memories and the value of a good story. By the time he was famous Peter Dawson liked to present himself as unchanged by fame, so he was at pains to avoid any suggestion of snobbery. While the story would only have a meaning for residents of Adelaide, it is clear that, like all cities, there were the better class residential areas. St. Peters, a corner of East Adelaide, received its name later than East Adelaide from its proximity to St. Peters College, obviously a quality landmark.²² But Peter Dawson was not actually born in either: he was born in Castle Street, in the City, as Jessie said, but, as he grew up in an East Adelaide, which was qualified with two names, he must have believed he was born there. In fact, only Jessie, the youngest,

¹⁵Seidner, 1982, 02.00, in 'Cover Coverage', *Australian Stamp Monthly*. Stamps were issued 31.01.1982 to celebrate the Centenary of Peter Dawson's birth.

¹⁶newspaper interview, 1931, 09.19

¹⁷Manning, 1990; *Place Names of South Australia*:: East Adelaide - One such subdivision of this name is advertised in the Register ... 1884 as being situated on part section 280 fronting Payneham Road and opposite the Buck's Head Hotel - "Healthy locality, no deep drainage, no unpleasant smells"

¹⁸Adelaide newspaper, 1989, 04.01

¹⁹should be Jessie

²⁰Jessie, 1960, 10.30

²¹his birth certificate

²²East Adelaide School 1886-1986 : East Adelaide was one of the last public schools to be established in the inner suburban areas of Adelaide. It was only after a drain had been constructed along the length of St. Peters Street to channel and tame Second Creek which meandered through the area, creating awkward little hills and hollows and causing frequent flooding, that subdivision of the area could proceed ... In 1885, work was begun on a new school and teacher's residence in Second Avenue.

was born at 5th Avenue; eight of the nine children were born in the City. Shortly after Peter was born the family moved outside the Parklands. Waymouth Street, the first business address of T. Dawson & Sons, ran from Light Square, which was an area of questionable repute, near to saleyards and the light industrial area. Gilbert Street on the opposite (South) side of the City provided more space and was a short walk from the family home, a couple of blocks away to the East over King William Street. A short Castle Street²³ still runs into Halifax Street. Seidner believed that Peter Dawson's street has disappeared, but in 1949 Peter Dawson²⁴ thanked a family in Halifax Street for allowing him to have a look at the house where he was born, so it may be concluded that it was on the corner of Halifax and Castle Street, not where Seidner believed it to be.

From several sources²⁵ it is possible to get an accurate picture both of Peter Dawson's school record and the attitude to schooling in the colony. In the fledgling colony it was argued that schooling would reduce crime and vice, and make South Australian children more productive workers and politically responsible adults. Following the Education Act of 1875, which made education compulsory and secular - Catholics read secular as non-sectarian Protestant - 'impressive public institutions were erected in the urban landscape'. East Adelaide Primary School - at St. Peters! - which opened in 1886:

was one of the last public schools to be established in the inner suburban areas of Adelaide. It was only after a drain had been constructed along the length of St. Peters Street to channel and tame Second Creek which meandered through the area, creating awkward little hills and hollows and causing frequent flooding, that subdivision of the area could proceed ... In 1885, work was begun on a new school and teacher's residence in Second Avenue.²⁶

Originally there had been a basic education in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic - the three Rs - plus the 'thorough training in the duties of responsible citizenship'. In 1885, when East Adelaide Primary was being built, the curriculum underwent reform: there were 'instructions in the principles of morality, reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, English

²³When stamps were issued to celebrate the Centenary of Peter Dawson's birth, 31.01.1982. Seidner, 1982, 02.00, in 'Cover Coverage', *Australian Stamp Monthly*, pp. 83,85,87 provided extensive detail based on his research plus that of Peter Burgis for the record set *Ambassador of Song*, also issued for the Centenary. He explains various spellings of Castle Street: the section North of Ely Street where Peter Dawson was born was spelt Castle St in 1880 as it is today, but there was also a section South spelt Cassell St. The spelling on the birth certificate is Cassel. Seidner adds:

What's more, this survey shows that there are only four houses on this small section! We believe Dawson's house is one of these four.

²⁴newspaper, 1949, 03.22

²⁵unless otherwise noted the sources are:

East Adelaide Primary School, School Record: 3rd April, 1887 - September 1893,

East Adelaide Primary School Centenary 1886-1986

Pulteney Grammar School, 1996, 05.09

Richards, 1986, 'Education', *Flinders History of South Australia*, 389-396

²⁶East Adelaide Primary School 1886-1986

grammar and composition, geography, history, poetry, elementary natural history or science, drill.' In 1890 free elementary schooling was introduced. 'Schooling took second place to work in a society dominated by need for hard manual work'. When Peter Dawson attended school, there was 'a general exodus'²⁷ from government schools after the compulsory schooling age of 13 was reached. With country children in mind, it was accepted that children's labour was needed in particular seasons, such as the planting and harvesting of crops, so children between the ages of seven and thirteen were only required to attend for a minimum of thirty-five days in each quarter-year.²⁸ Very few students attended every day: some absenteeism was blamed on endemic children's diseases and epidemics but there was also the underlying philosophy of child labour in maintenance of the family economy. Sons of day-labourers missed more than those of skilled workers and shop-keepers, and girls missed even more than boys because their household duties included looking after younger children, doing the Monday wash, and cooking. In fact, very few students attended every day, although it is reported that the curriculum was taught as if everyone attended full-time. On statistics for the district of Hindmarsh Richard's observes that only about 10% made the annual promotion through the grades and managed to pass the compulsory standard at the end of class 4 before reaching the age of 13.

As one of its most famous pupils, Peter Dawson is mentioned several times in the *East Adelaide Primary School Souvenir Booklet 1886-1933*. On page 10 a School Group photograph purporting to be 'taken in 1886' shows 'Peter Dawson ... 2nd from left back row'. That would make him four years old but the boys look much older. In the more recent school publication,²⁹ Peter Dawson is said to have walked to school in 1886 hand in hand with the daughter of the stone-mason who had built the school. As romantic as these descriptions may be and against the background of Education policy at that time, Peter Dawson's School Record³⁰ is quite revealing.

As in his Birth Certificate, the School Record indicates that Peter Dawson was the son of Thomas Dawson, Ironworker, though by then living in the 'Fifth Avenue, East' house of the Real Estate advertisement. To confuse researchers the date of Peter Dawson's birth is given as 28.2.82! The School Report indicates that he did not begin school until 3rd April 1887, not 1886, and finished there in September 1893, that is, he attended from age 5 to 11. The School Record classified the school years as two years Junior School then Grades I-IV. With the exception of the second quarter of 1888 and 1893 Peter Dawson attended far more than the quarterly minimum, and progressed satisfactorily from year to year, which puts him into the 10% of achievers. Peter Dawson passed the 'Compulsory Standard' exam of Grade 4 in 1892, age 10, then continued for another three quarters of a year. So, unless his date of birth is incorrect, he had completed his education between the ages of 5-11 instead of 7-13.

²⁷Richards, 1986, 377, 607

²⁸*East Adelaide School*: 'a minimum of seventy days in each half-year'

²⁹*East Adelaide School, 1886-1986*

³⁰the handwritten pages pertaining to Peter Dawson

Advice from the Pulteney Grammar School³¹ indicates that he attended from 1895-1898, age 13-16³², which leaves an unexplained gap of one year, 1894.³³ As the compulsory leaving age was thirteen, this post-Primary School education seems to be unusual for the times, especially as Peter Dawson also admits to an apprenticeship.

The Pulteney Street School, which was 'intended for the children of the working classes', was a church school 'in Pulteney-street, next to St. Paul's Church',³⁴ which is close to the city centre. From 1848 to 1884 there were a boy's section and a girl's section but from 1884 it became an all-boys school. 'Being a church school, (it) charged low fees in order to compete with the state schools'. When the school moved to its present site on South Terrace in 1921, it changed its name to Pulteney Grammar School, the name which Peter Dawson was pleased to use in his biographies.³⁵

About 1895, when Peter Dawson was at the Pulteney Street School, the family moved to Windsor on the North-East Road.³⁶ Land there had been sub-divided as far back as 1849.³⁷ Today Windsor is relatively close to the City, but in 1895 the farm, which according to Peter Dawson's nephew³⁸ was 'only a few acres', was still out in the country, so 'Thomas drove a horse

³¹Pulteney Grammar School, 1996, 05.09

³²newspaper photograph, 1931, 09.26, also suggests that Peter Dawson stayed at school until he was nearly 17. 'Peter Dawson with Sergeant Major Thomas, old South African War veteran. Sergeant Major Thomas had been the drill Sergeant at Peter Dawson's school, Pulteney St School in 1898.

(author's note): This date would have been reported by either Peter Dawson or the S-M; it appears to confirm the information from Pulteney School. The caption suggests that the S-M was a Boer War veteran when he was Peter Dawson's drill sergeant, but the Boer War did not begin (October 11 1899) until Peter Dawson had left school.

Similarly newspaper, 1931, 09.26: *Peter Dawson takes up drawing - Old days at Pulteney School recalled*: 'When Peter Dawson was a boy he prided himself on his drawing, in which he had Hans Heysen as a school-fellow rival, nearly as much as singing.'

(author's note): Pulteney Grammar, 1996, 05.09 advises: 'we have no record of Hans Heysen at PSS'. East Adelaide School 1886-1986: claims that Hans Heysen spent two years at East Adelaide Primary. Perhaps Peter Dawson is confusing schools. But as Hans Heysen, 1877-1968, [Splatt & Bruce, 1981, 142] was five years older than Peter Dawson he would hardly have been 'a school-fellow rival' at either school. Peter Dawson has made the association to turn his drawing efforts in the classroom-revisited into a better story.

³³Pulteney Grammar School, 1996, 08.20, addendum on being asked about the missing year: Peter Dawson may well have been at Pulteney Street School in 1894, & at the end of 1893. We don't have any record of this but since we know he attended East Adelaide P/School & PSS & that he left East Adel in Sept '93, it's reasonable to assume that he was at PSS from Sept '93 to '98.

³⁴newspaper 1931, 09.26: (PD revisits old school)... tales of his schoolboy days, when Pulteney Grammar was in Pulteney-street, next to St. Paul's Church, and the boys used to bombard departing wedding parties from peashooters ...Then followed stories of pens made into darts being shot into the wooden ceiling, and one falling on an industrious boy's head.

³⁵recording, c.1985: 'educated at a grammar school'; newspaper, 1991, 08.23: 'Attended Pulteney Street Grammar School', both sourced from available information which must have emanated from Peter Dawson.

But *Who's Who in Australia*, 1933 & 1959 use 'Pulteney St. School', and newspaper, 1931, 10.01: 'loves to get back to his native Australia ... Adelaide in particular because that is where he learned his "reading, writing and 'rithmetic," at Pulteney- street school.'

³⁶Cockburn, 1984, 'Windsor'

³⁷Manning, 1990, 'Windsor'

³⁸biography, 1996, 01.26

and trap to work each day and took the sons to school and work'. In the buggy it would have been a good hour away from Peter Dawson's school and the business in Gilbert Street.

The question arises, why did Peter Dawson attend this school? Was his school record so good that his parents thought he might have academic prospects? The School Archivist writes that 'boys were encouraged to sit for the Preliminary Examination conducted by the University of Adelaide'. Though Peter Dawson never accented the academic side of his schooling, it may be assumed that the church school curriculum was an advanced version of that of the well-supervised³⁹ Primary Schools. The available information is: a school swimming certificate⁴⁰ and a prize for Drawing in 1895; in 1896 prizes for 'Work, Writing, Drawing and Shorthand' and also 'Champion Swimmer'.⁴¹ No special achievements are recorded for 1897 or 1898.

'Working life began for all the Dawson boys, Jim, Tom, Dave, Will and Peter, in their father's business'. As soon as he left school, Peter Dawson became apprenticed as a plumber⁴² to T. Dawson and Sons. As the minimum school leaving age was 13, it would suggest that apprenticeships would start then and finish after three, possibly four years, that is at 16 or 17 years of age. But Peter Dawson has a school record until 1898, which suggests that he went into his father's business at about 17 years of age and, accepting that he did serve an apprenticeship, would have finished when he was 20, the year he left for England. As he reports in his autobiography that he had intended to go to England already in 1901, it must be presumed that he had completed his obligation to the factory by then. There is some confusion here: the missing year, 1894, suggests that the advice from Pulteney Grammar could be suspect⁴³, and leads to several hypotheses: a) from prize and certificates, he attended only in 1895 and 1896 and could have taken up the apprenticeship when he was fifteen; b) he had a year off, he attended from 1895-1898, and took up the apprenticeship at age 17; c) he attended from 1894-1898 and was never apprenticed at all for:⁴⁴

... in 1917, when the [technical education of apprentices] Act was passed, apprenticeship was a wholly haphazard matter in the city of Adelaide; no one in authority knew whether any new worker was an apprentice or not, what school or workshop training he was receiving (if any), and no information was available as to the number of apprentices in any particular trade or calling.

About 1900 the family left the farm at Windsor. As the father was nearing 60, as all the boys were at work by then, as Peter was becoming more and

³⁹Richards, 1986, 'Education', 389-396

⁴⁰April 3rd 1895 'first examination in the art of SWIMMING'

⁴¹newspaper, 1991, 08.23: 'As a boy he went in for most sports, doing particularly well as a swimmer and as time went on winning both junior and senior championships at school.'

⁴²newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁴³Pulteney Grammar, 1996, 08.20: 'may well have been at PSS in 1894 ... no record'

⁴⁴State Library of SA, 1996: Fenner, C., 1924, "Apprenticeship Training", S.A. Education Department Bulletin No.1, p.5, Adelaide, Government Printer

more involved in choral singing and performing, as the family was involved in the life of the Wakefield Presbyterian Church in the City, not to mention the needs of the young ladies of the family - the daily drive to the City must have seemed pointless. The family moved to 6 South Terrace⁴⁵ where the parents lived until they died.

As Peter Dawson grew up in a strict Presbyterian family, both his home life and the life in the 'kirk' would have had a significant effect on his development. When Peter Dawson spoke of his parents' reaction to his wish to study singing in England he described his 'dour' father and put Scottish dialogue into his mouth. Clearly both emigrant parents had retained their Scots accents, a brogue which Peter Dawson could also use whenever he wished. He later recorded many popular Scottish music hall songs with an authentic accent,⁴⁶ and throughout his life included many good Scottish songs in his repertoire.⁴⁷

As would be expected, a serious couple like Thomas and Alison Dawson brought up their large family under the aegis of their church: as a typical family 'strict Presbyterianism sent them all to church twice every Sunday, and forbade piano-playing on the Sabbath'.⁴⁸

That it should be referred to throughout Australia as 'the city of churches' is an indication of the significant role churches played in the life of Adelaide.⁴⁹ This dominance was achieved practically from its inception. As South Australia was developed by subscription in London, the early settlers merely sought to transport the life they knew in England onto this foreign soil. First came the Anglicans, then the Methodists, who became 'the most potent religious movement in nineteenth century South Australia'. The Catholic Irish also sought religious freedom there, as did Lutheran Germans. Presbyterian preachers followed Scots, like Dawson's parents, who sought a new land where their skills could be used to better advantage.⁵⁰

Australia accepted religious pluralism. In theory, the state favoured none, but, because of the strong ties to England, there was the perception that Anglicans believed they had a special relationship with the state, that the other Protestant sects kept careful watch on them, while the Catholics, who had a grievance against England, regarded themselves as a persecuted minority. While Catholics tended to keep to themselves, there was a more fluid relationship between the other denominations, particularly in the area of music.

That his father 'sent them all to church twice every Sunday' was quite

⁴⁵ about a block from the business.

⁴⁶Chapter 3

⁴⁷Chapter 7

⁴⁸newspaper interview, 1951, 04.25

⁴⁹information on Churches: Hillard, *The City of Churches* in Dickey (ed), 1992 with support from Richards, 1986, *Flinders History of South Australia* and McKernan, 1980, *Australian Churches at War*

⁵⁰(author's note:) my own great-grandfather emigrated from Scotland at about the same time as Dawson's parents to work on building the docks at Port Adelaide. Later, he walked to Ararat in Victoria, where he acquired farmland, which his great-great-grand children are still working today.

normal at that time. The Sabbath was dedicated to non-secular pursuits, but the church had also evolved a 'cluster of organisations and societies' for 'all age-groups and leisure interests' to provide 'a wholesome counter-attraction to the moral dangers of the hotel bar and the billiard saloon'. Not only the religious life but the cultural life and entertainment of a typical Protestant family like the Dawsons revolved around their church. Apart from Church there was Sunday School, which 'was approaching a peak of popularity and prestige' around 1900, and 'a never-ending round of social activities and fund-raising functions' which included anything from 'musical evenings, concerts, quarterly socials' to 'Saturday cricket matches'. The percentage of Presbyterians was actually less in South Australia than in any other State. There were three congregations in the City, relics of three different branches of Scottish Presbyterianism, of which the Wakefield Street Presbyterian was one. These City congregations 'were solidly middle-class, self-centred and jealous of their positions'. That 'one quarter of their members lived in the inner city: the remainder came in from the suburbs' fits the Dawsons from their Castle Street days until the return to the City from Windsor.

What sort of person evolved from this background? Photos of Peter Dawson in his twenties show well-formed features, a straight-nose, masses of dark curly hair. The imagination of his listeners sketched him as 'heldenhaft', but forgetting the weight he had put on by 1918, Army records show that he was quite short: five foot six and a half inches. He had an unusually large chest measurement, possibly developed by then in the course of his profession, of 40-43 inches; 'Complexion: Dark, Eyes: Grey, Hair: Dark Brown, Distinctive Marks: 7 vacs. L. (vaccinations in the left arm), Dentally fit, Tattoos both Arms and Chest.' By then his 'Trade or Calling' was 'Vocalist, Master Plumber' and under 'Apprentice' had first answered 'No' but that was crossed out and 'Yes, Apprenticed to T. Dawson' substituted.

Peter Dawson's many happy memories of his youth, with the possible exception of drawing, are all athletic: 'from his own accounts (he) must have been a healthy-minded active boy, delighting in football and other sports'.⁵¹ He speaks of riding a great deal with his elder brothers, David, who was an expert judge of horses, and Will who was 'a "class rider" and buckjump performer'⁵² and, as an 18 years old working in his father's business, he nursed the ambition of becoming a prize fighter, 'an ambition further strengthened when at nineteen he won an amateur boxing championship'.⁵³

Indicative of this growth to manliness was smoking. Today, when the dangers of smoking have been widely canvassed, when cigarette advertisements have been curtailed, cigarette packages carry a health warning and a portion of the population has given up the addiction, is there a tendency to forget how popular and how sophisticated smoking was?

⁵¹Glennon, 1968, 47-48

⁵²newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁵³Glennon, 1968, 47-48

Much later, in the cinema, there was seldom a film in which the character of most of the adult cast was not defined by the way they smoked, and comedy kids were always caught smoking in the shed or behind the back fence. Peter Dawson was no different. Notionally parents deplored the habit but most men smoked. 'Peter, too, in the days when he was trying to be a man before he had grown out of being a boy' aped his father by adopting 'the black rank twist favoured by seamen'. After his marriage, he concedes, his wife very soon persuaded him to smoke a milder style⁵⁴. Although it would make sense for a singer to avoid the habit, he actually promoted it.⁵⁵ Unexpected though it might be, another sign of 'trying to be a man before he had grown out of being a boy' were the tattoos. Again using his father, who 'though not a sailor, had one of the brands of the trade in the form of a large crucifix tattooed on his forearm', as a role model, Peter Dawson proved his ardour for a few of his youthful sweethearts by having his arms and chest tattooed. It may have proved the extent of his ardour for a few youthful sweethearts but in later life proved a minor embarrassment.⁵⁶

His 'official' language, when he writes or speaks, is relatively simple, pompous, platitudinous, indicative of confidence but limited in education. Like many men of his generation there were other languages: a rough language, the language of the manual worker and the shop floor, for male company and a respectful language for mixed company. These language norms existed comfortably beside each other: published stories attributed to Peter Dawson are relatively harmless yet there is evidence to suggest that he made harmlessly salacious comments about girls,⁵⁷ swore 'like a trooper',⁵⁸ and liked 'blue' jokes.⁵⁹ These 'worldly' elements extended to gambling, but, interestingly, not to drinking, at least not in his youth. In 1951 it was reported that he 'does not think that fine Scotch has done him anything but good'⁶⁰ but in his early days in Glasgow and in the recording studio the Presbyterian temperance philosophy still held sway: 'Dawson in the matter of drink was a quasi teetotaller'.⁶¹

His character obviously stems from an ebullient, outgoing nature. Even in a strict household the interaction of nine children would have led to games and pranks, teasing, rows, anxieties and pleasures, boys fighting and wrestling, where the youngest son, particularly if he was of a sunny nature, would have had less responsibility than his elder brothers, enjoyed their protection and been 'mothered' by his elder sisters. In Peter Dawson's recollections of his happy youth there is little talk of singing. He likes to portray himself as a fairly rugged sort of individual. Observations by others confirm his self-confidence, his good-humour, his practical jokes; as the character of this spontaneous young man evolved the larrikin element combined comfortably with an assiduous Presbyterian work-ethic and morality.

⁵⁴newspaper 1951, 04.25

⁵⁵Appendix 3

⁵⁶Glennon, 1981, 246 & newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁵⁷Dawson, 1950, 10.19 - see Appendix 3

⁵⁸EMI, 1992 - see Appendix 3

⁵⁹biography, 1994, 07.27: see Appendix 3

⁶⁰newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁶¹Gaisberg, EMI, 1949, 01.00, 126

Until Peter Dawson reached England his most likely sources of music would have been the home or the church.⁶² There were no gramophones or radios; music was part of home life. The amateur market was quite voracious.⁶³ Works by famous composers were available in simplified form so that the amateur pianist, guitarist, flute player, violinist, or any other instrumentalist, could cope with them.

When the South Australia Act was declared in London in 1834, 'settlers, who had bought land formed the South Australian Literary Society', with the express purpose of organising the cultural life of their future colony. So colonial culture began as a direct copy of English culture. Music played an important part in this culture: 'when early settlers came to South Australia they brought their musical instruments', including pianos, 'with them'.

The culture of a strict Presbyterian family like the Dawsons was this English culture as far as permitted by the church environment, for 'music which was performed in the churches was at the centre of their cultural life'. At home there may have been popular songs of the period, those sentimental ballads popular in the Victorian era, which became Peter Dawson's métier, for 'around the turn of the century music hall songs and descriptive piano pieces were very popular';⁶⁴ and there were certainly hymns and songs with a sacred flavour. In later life Peter Dawson admitted that 'he knows of no outstanding musical talent in the family background' but as there were nine children in the house 'the piano got a thrashing'. Jessie, his youngest sister, could play enough piano to accompany her brother.⁶⁵ Playing the piano on Sunday was forbidden although it was permitted to play sacred music on Thomas Dawson's 'big American organ'.⁶⁶

Why did Peter Dawson take up singing? Why does any singer take up singing? Is there a sudden revelation from the gods? While the best instrumentalists study their instrument consequentially from 'an early age'⁶⁷ for most male singers the decision to study singing is not taken until after puberty. The starting point is an aberration of nature. Among other changes which occur at puberty, the short vocal chords, which have produced a male child's soprano voice literally break up or disintegrate, to be replaced with those longer vocal chords, which produce the generic adult male voice. Most voices are capable of singing, but relatively few have a quality worthy of training. The generic male singing voice is the baritone, rarer are basses, those capable of singing quality low notes, and much rarer still those that can sing higher notes naturally, the tenors.

⁶²detailed consideration Chapter 6. general information about music in Adelaide based on: Szuster, 'Concert Life in Adelaide' (173 -), Swale, 'Liturgical & Choral traditions' (193 -), Salisbury, 'Secular Choral Music' (208 -), Clark, 'Music in the Home' (444 -) in McCredie, 1988, *From Colonel Light into the Footlights*

⁶³Clark, 'Music in the Home'; Smith, 1989, unpublished MMus diss. *Lortzing's 'Der Wildschütz'*; Boosey, 1931, *Fifty Years of Music*

⁶⁴Clark, in McCredie, 1988

⁶⁵biography, 1993, 03.25

⁶⁶newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁶⁷(author's comment) this meaningless phrase often appears in biographies; is it supposed to imply a child prodigy? Certain is that today string players and pianists are learning by six years of age and earlier. Most proficient instrumentalists begin playing 'at an early age'.

The voice is usually noticed in a situation in which singing is a common practice, in his case, at church, for it was 'in the choir at St. Andrew's Church, Wakefield-street, that his robust baritone first attracted notice'.⁶⁸ 'Many churches [had] choirs of some musical quality', which supported the singing of their congregations through the performance of anthems and oratorios.⁶⁹ As his family were avid supporters of the church not only Peter Dawson sang in the choir, but probably his brothers and sisters too; 'the proudest people in the congregation were my mother and father. It was their desire that I should at least aspire to becoming soloist in the choir'.⁷⁰

As the male voice is in a state of flux until it has settled after puberty, the quality of the sound is not apparent and not realistically capable of training until the male is 17 or 18 years of age at the earliest. Putting aside phrases like 'penchant to burst into song no matter where he was'⁷¹ and 'The Singing Plumber',⁷² Peter Dawson's descriptions of his early study habits⁷³ and his first performances indicate that his voice was 'discovered' when he was about eighteen years old, which led to him taking singing lessons 'for my own amusement'. The young man sought someone to teach him how to sing in the classical style: not simply as a natural singer but like professional singers, who need to develop skills that allow them to encompass the difficulties of music by great composers: composers of oratorio, opera, art songs and ballads. These skills are applied to songs of varying difficulty as the student progresses through a slow regime of learning scales and vocal exercises which, by dint of daily practise, strengthen the vocal muscles, in order to produce a consistently acceptable tone and gradually extend the limited natural range of the voice to at least two octaves.

The impulse to study singing would have come from someone who believed in the benefits of training, a professional of some sort, most likely a choirmaster. John James Virgo, a preacher and amateur singer, takes some credit for the discovery of Peter Dawson's voice and his introduction to his first teacher, C. J. Stevens.⁷⁴

One of my most pleasurable experiences in connection with music was my "discovery" of a singer who was later to become world-famous. The prologue to the incident was my singing of the bass solos in the first performance in Australia of Gounoud's "Redemption". ... The conductor of our performance was C. J. Stevens. ... The year following I was singing at a small garden-party, and was impressed profoundly by the voice of another soloist, who, although little more than a boy, possessed a

⁶⁸newspaper, 1931, 09.19

⁶⁹Swale, 'Liturgical & Choral traditions' in McCredie, 1988

⁷⁰newspaper, 1931, 09.19

⁷¹newspaper, 1991, 08.23

⁷²newspaper, *Reuters*, 1938, 10.24, and newspaper, 1951, 04.25 among others

⁷³newspaper 1931, 09.19, newspaper 1950, 12.05

⁷⁴Virgo, J., 1939, 35. *Fifty Years Fishing For Men*.. Virgo, Don, 1994: John James Virgo C.B.E., my Great Grandfather was general secretary of the Y.M.C.A. who travelled the world extensively preaching and singing ...

Another newspaper correspondent, 1949, 10.05, claims he heard Peter Dawson in a pub and sent him to Stevens.

magnificent baritone. ... "I hate to make you conceited," I announced, "but do you know that that voice of yours is really something out of the ordinary? If you take my advice, you'll see about getting it trained properly." "Who do you think would do that for me?" the young man asked. "Stevens is the best man at the moment," I said, "he won't need to produce your voice for you, but he'll tell you how to use it." The sequel occurred a few months later, when Stevens ... asked me to sing ... the baritone solos ... in the "Redemption". "Who's singing the bass part?" "That young fellow there - one of my pupils. He's going to be a great singer. Peter Dawson's his name."

If this were true, his claim to have sung the bass part in Stevens' first production of Gounod's *Redemption* the year before Peter Dawson sang it would give a clue to the date of Peter Dawson's early training.

Most biographies identify only the cultivated English singer, Charles Santley as Peter Dawson's teacher, but it was Peter Dawson's good fortune that the burgeoning colonial city had attracted among its emigrants one, Charles Stevens, who became his original teacher and mentor. The achievements of the early Adelaide days indicate a debt to Stevens for encouragement, creating a sound basis for vocal development and for throwing the boy in at the deep end, vocally speaking.

In the colonial days of Peter Dawson's youth secular choral and orchestral concerts in Adelaide were in their infancy for they had only begun around 1880.⁷⁵ In 1887, Charles J. Stevens, who became organist at 'Christ Church, North Adelaide and Unitarian Church, Wakefield Street' arrived in Adelaide. He quickly established an 'Adelaide Choral Society', 'conducted the *Messiah* in that year' and 'also set up the Adelaide Orpheus Society'. Stevens' productions of *Redemption* and regular performances of *Messiah*⁷⁶ were the product of the original concept of the importation of English culture for he had 'been a member of the Chapel Royal Choir' and, significantly, 'had worked with both Mendelssohn and Gounod in the preparation of their works'. From this it would also follow that he would also promote performances of *Elijah*⁷⁷, one of the most significant works of the period, which Mendelssohn had composed for one of the major English choral festivals, which were centrepieces of English musical activity in industrial Victorian England.⁷⁸

As emigrants of Stevens' calibre were both church organists and choral conductors it is understandable why 'the functions of church choir and choral society [were] often overlapping'⁷⁹ and led to the generalisation:

in nineteenth-century Britain the choral society and its repertory were the true nucleus of formal music-making; and the history of concert-going in the various cities and towns of Australia is largely reducible to the founding of one society of this kind after another.⁸⁰

⁷⁵Salisbury, in McCredie, 1988

⁷⁶Manning: 1996, 87

⁷⁷features in Dawson's recording and concert repertoire.

⁷⁸Appendix 4: explanation and musical opinion

⁷⁹Swale, in McCredie, 1988

⁸⁰Salisbury, 208, in McCredie, 1988, footnoted as Covell, 1967, 17 *Themes of a new society*

Peter Dawson accepted a specific discipline, which would gradually change the course of his life and constrain him to predicate all his activities on the priority of practising, preparing repertoire and protecting the health of his voice. He recalls his acceptance of this essential baggage of all professionals; 'he would ride his horse out to Stevens' place at Wayville for lessons:⁸¹

"When I was 18 I used to get up at 6, practise scales for half an hour before breakfast and get to work at 7.30. Then after I had finished work at 5 I used to have tea and start lessons again. Hard work, eh? I don't suppose you would get many young chaps to do it now, but it didn't do me any harm."

From singing in the church choir, to singing lessons, to performances with Stevens' secular choirs was a logical progression. Virgo claims that he recommended Peter Dawson to Stevens but it seems more likely that Stevens would have heard the young man in his own church choir or one of the others. Peter Dawson's first public appearance appears to have been in *Redemption*⁸² where 'the 17 years old' 'scored a success in a bass part', although Manning⁸³ claims he 'made his debut with the [Adelaide Grand]⁸⁴ orchestra in July'.

Later reports accredit professional excellence to the Adelaide choirs,⁸⁵ a compliment to the choirmasters, who favoured fashionable Victorian composers, because they deliberately wrote for the vocal limits of untrained singers. At the turn of the century the small Adelaide orchestra was no more than a mix of amateur and semi-professional players. As Stevens was using amateur singers like Virgo it may be assumed that in December 1899 Peter Dawson too was virtually untrained, and that he was just beginning serious lessons with Stevens.

There may be confusion between *Redemption* (1899) and *Messiah* (1900): from various sources it appears that the Adelaide Choral Society presented an oratorio annually in December.⁸⁶ Confusion too about the date of the much-touted Ballarat prize: 'at eighteen (1900) he sang the bass solos in Handel's "Messiah" ... in the same year he won first prize and gold medal against all comers at Ballarat. Can you wonder why plumbing palled!'⁸⁷

⁸¹newspaper, 1931, 09.19

⁸²i) EMI, 1926, 02.00: ...18 First Prize and Gold Medal for a bass solo. ...1900 baritone part in Gounoud's *Redemption* ... by Adelaide Choral Society. This was his first public appearance

ii) newspaper, *Reuters*, 1938, 10.24: At the age of 17, he scored a success in a bass part in Gounoud's "Redemption", produced by the Adelaide Choral Society. Then he entered for a Ballarat singing contest, winning the first prize and a gold medal for a bass solo.

iii) newspaper, 1955, 08.26: Dawson made his debut as a serious singer when, at seventeen, he sang in Gounoud's *Redemption* in Adelaide.

(author's note): The prize in Ballarat was 17th January 1901! *Messiah* was December 1900! (x-ref Virgo version Chapter 2)

⁸³Manning, 1996, 89

⁸⁴Szuster, in McCredie, 1988, 177: Heinicke, a German violinist, formed Heinicke's Grand Orchestra, the first permanent orchestra 1893. 1893-1897 annual series of concerts

⁸⁵ biography, 1988 (Amy Castle CD booklet) In December 1909 tour Charles Stevens conducted 'the Adelaide Choral Society, augmented to 250 voices, together with a chosen orchestra, numbering 50'

⁸⁶ Dawson, 1951,33: photo as member of Adelaide Choral Society - Christmas 1901, Dawson dates not always reliable; could be 1900.

⁸⁷newspaper, 1933, 10.12

The success at Ballarat needs closer scrutiny, for it is intended to indicate that Peter Dawson's outstanding gifts were immediately recognised. As a starting point take the apparently precise: 'he went to the South-street competitions with the Adelaide Bach Society, conducted by Dr. Harold Davies, and won the bass solo with "The Bandit Chief", a Pinsuti composition'.⁸⁸

According to a newspaper report⁸⁹, the excitement of that 'Eighteenth Day, Evening Session, Thursday 17th January 1901' lay, not in the Bass Solo, but in the choral event at the Albert Hall, 'with its enormous seating capacity', where the smaller choral groups were being adjudicated in parallel to the competition for bass voices in the more intimate Her Majesty's. The set piece chosen for the Bass Solo competition was 'J. Christopher Mark's fine composition, "The Bandit Chief" - not Pinsuti's. Seventeen competitors had entered but only nine 'came forward'. In pronouncing 'P. S. Dawson' 'an easy winner' the adjudicator, Professor Petersen, said that the standard was good but Peter Dawson 'stood out head and shoulders above the other competitors'.⁹⁰ As soon as the Bass Solo was decided judge, competitors and audience rushed down to the other hall for the massed choirs, Professor Peterson to adjudicate, the singers to join their choirs.

Peter Dawson's emphasis on the Ballarat prize raises the question of the importance of the competition. Biographies imply that the prize was the turning point in his life. Certainly, the Vocal sections, particularly 'The "Sun" Aria', have grown to become the focus of the Royal South Street Competitions from whence many an established Australian singer can trace the beginning their career, but on that evening in 1901 the focus lay with the choral groups.

Among the massed choirs was an Adelaide choir, the augmented Kent Town Methodist Choir, conducted by E. Harold Davies, Mus. Bac. Peter Dawson was one of the augmenting singers. The Kent Town Methodist Church belonged to one of 'a handful' of rich Protestant churches, 'sometimes referred to as 'fashionable' even 'aristocratic' '. Apart from service music and oratorio choirs took part in choral competitions 'to stimulate their enthusiasm and competence'. It was also quite common for Protestant singers to move 'freely from one church to another and from one denomination to another'.⁹¹

Although transport was deficient and inadequate, 'towards the end of the nineteenth century locomotive development had advanced rapidly',⁹²

⁸⁸newspaper, 1931, 09.19

⁸⁹Royal South Street Competition, 1996, 01.11: Ballarat newspaper, 1901, 01.18 (Friday)

⁹⁰Royal South Street Competition, 1996, 01.11: another Ballarat newspaper, 1901, 01. 18

⁹¹information on Kent Town Choir based on Salisbury, Elizabeth 'Secular Choral Music in SA' in McCredie, 1988 and David Hillard 'The City of Churches' in Dickey, 1992, 66 -

⁹²Brooke, 1984, *The Railways of Australia*: The first steam train ran in Victoria in 1854; in South Australia, Adelaide to Port Adelaide, in 1856. Initially, most track was laid for short distances for specific purposes such as timber haulage, but 'towards end of the nineteenth century locomotive development had advanced rapidly'. Because colonies were proudly independent rail gauges had been chosen without consultation with each other. Victoria favoured the wide 5'3" 'Irish' gauge; the colony of South Australia also began with this gauge. For economic reasons it turned later to the narrower, less expensive 3'6" gauge for country areas, but reached an agreement with Victoria that each should lay 5'3" gauge to join

since 1887 it had been possible to travel by train from Adelaide to Melbourne, or in this case, to Ballarat, a major railway junction 56 miles from Melbourne. In 1901, the nineteen year-old Presbyterian bass, Peter Dawson,⁹³ took advantage of his inclusion as an augmenting singer in a company of about sixty choristers to enter a solo section too.

In summary: Peter Dawson was a regular member of his church choir and helped out in other choirs. His natural ability was sufficient to sing, in *Redemption*, about a month before his eighteenth birthday. About this time he began taking lessons from C. J. Stevens, who used his student as a soloist and encouraged him to participate in competitions. In 1900 he sang *Messiah*,⁹⁴ had 'another success as champion soloist at the Adelaide Exhibition of 1900',⁹⁵ and in early 1901 participated in a choral competition and was successful in a competition against eight other amateur bass voices in a small Victorian gold-mining town.

This success in the relatively minor Ballarat solo competition may simply indicate that Peter Dawson had had more training than the other competitors, not that he was abnormally gifted. More impressive was his capability to cover the broad vocal range and technique to rattle around the difficult coloratura of *Messiah* bass solos and to negotiate the perils of the *Acis & Galatea* aria, *O Ruddier than the Cherry* with equanimity at age eighteen, although the apparent quality must be balanced against the value judgement of a small parochial 'city'. On his own admission, the teacher auditioning him in London recognised the underlying professional quality of the voice but it was still pretty rough.⁹⁶ His background factors in little that could not be applied to many amateur singers, who would never have contemplated a professional career.

There is a quantum leap between singing at home, singing solos at church, even singing solos in *Messiah* in the Adelaide Town Hall at the time of Federation, and deciding to join the singing profession in London. As the prime motivation for Peter Dawson's immigrant parents would have been to gain a firm foothold in the new society of their choice, the fact that Peter Dawson was taking singing lessons, had won a section in some singing competition and sung with the local philharmonic society, would hardly seem enough reason to persuade a severely conservative immigrant father, who was intent on building up a plumbing and gas-fitting business as security for his family and their future, to send his son to London to study singing. Any connection to serious music overseas at that time was very tenuous. Oratorio and sacred music had the blessing of religion but secular

at their border. South Australia completed its section to Servicetown in 1886 and the Victorian component was completed on 19th January 1887.

⁹³As he was in the Bass solo section he did not sing in the 'Small Choir' section. The augmented choir was not placed.

⁹⁴State Library of SA, 1996, 01.01, letter including the weekend newspaper, *The Observer*, 30 December 1899, *Messiah* 'first since 1896'; 29 December 1900 *Messiah*, Peter Dawson one of the soloists.

⁹⁵newspaper, 1931, 09.19, and newspaper 1931, 09.22 PD at Adelaide Town Hall luncheon: "Well do I remember the first song I sang here. It was 'O ruddier than the cherry' and I stood there (pointing to the end of the platform)

⁹⁶EMI, 1931, 04.00

singing, like drama and the arts in general, would have been considered at best an impecunious life-style with overtones of doubtful morality. The conversations between Peter Dawson and his parents about the latent possibilities of a singing career can only be a matter of sweet conjecture. That his tough Scots father warned him "Ye're ma richt haund mon, sae let me hear na muir o' that damned singing business"⁹⁷ seems to sum up the mood succinctly. However, Peter Dawson's extended secondary education suggests that there was a 'typical Scottish respect for education and talent',⁹⁸ coupled with the experienced C. J. Stevens' visionary exposition of the superior quality of Peter Dawson's talent and the benefits of studying in London with one of England's most famous teachers.

Whatever the clinching arguments, the decision was made. But when? Again, there is conflicting information about dates. In his autobiography Peter Dawson recalls⁹⁹ that he made a sturdy cabin trunk for the purpose in 1900, with the intention of leaving in 1901, but a bout of typhoid fever delayed his departure for a whole year. As his birth certificate was not corrected until December 1901, it indicates that he probably needed it for identification for travel in 1902. He and his brother reached London in 1902 'after eight weeks in a White Star liner that was half steam, half sail'¹⁰⁰ The White Star Liner was the *ss Afric*,¹⁰¹ which left Adelaide on 26th March 1902 and according to Peter Dawson¹⁰² berthed in London in May, on Derby Day at the end of the Boer War:

The South African War had just come to its long-drawn out end; peace had been declared the very day on which I arrived in London. ... The huge crowds returning from Epsom! ... Everyone singing, everyone happy, all carefree.

As recollection this may be near enough. The Boer War ended on May 31st¹⁰³ but not on Derby Day, for Derby Day would have been Wednesday, 4 June.¹⁰⁴ As the end of the Boer War and Derby Day have overlapped in Peter Dawson's memory it could be surmised that he and his brother left on a different ship about mid-April, for some biographies refer to a sister ship, *ss Medic*. In fact, they did sail on the *ss Afric* but not from Adelaide. Sailing information¹⁰⁵ shows that Peter Dawson could have caught the

⁹⁷EMI, 1931, 04.00

⁹⁸newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁹⁹Dawson, 1951, 17

¹⁰⁰Royal South Street Competition, 1996, 01.11: E. T. Lewis *The first one hundred years* (of the Royal South Street Society) writes that in 1902, the first Adjudicator of Music, who was imported from England, had sailed from London by the Mail Steamer "Arcadia" on the 14th August and arrived in Melbourne on the 1st October - just seven weeks!

¹⁰¹The information about departure and arrival can be found in Vose, 1987, 8-, but is essentially copied from Dawson, 1951, 17 and another newspaper interview 1951, 04.24

¹⁰²Dawson (1951, 17): 'We arrived in London on Derby Day'. Vose has written 1903, a typographical slip.

¹⁰³Boer War: October 11 1899 - May 31 1902

¹⁰⁴biography, 1996, 02.05: according to State Library of SA

¹⁰⁵biography, 1996, 02.05, response to request for sailing information: *The Register*, Adelaide, Monday, March 24th 1902: *White Star Line*: The S.S. *Afric* for PLYMOUTH and

Adelaide Express to Melbourne - the same train he had caught to Ballarat in 1901 - on Tuesday, 25 March, 1902 to leave Melbourne on 27 March. The ship's manifest names Peter and James Dawson as passengers from Melbourne 'to London via Hobart and Capetown'.¹⁰⁶ They boarded on 27 March and sailed on 29 March. These ships sailed at a speed of around 15 knots so the journey took about 50 days.¹⁰⁷ Therefore they arrived in London [Tilbury] about 17 May, before the Boer War ended and before Derby Day.

Peter Dawson was not the first Australian to try his or her luck in London but one of a very small select band nevertheless. Because of the cost and the travel time, not to mention the dislocation from home and family, few young Australians would have undertaken the 12,000 mile journey, especially to attempt to enter the singing profession. But 'at 20 the boy went off to the leisurely, gracious hub of the world that was London of the day',¹⁰⁸ a magnet, which attracted adventurous spirits to the heart of the British Empire.

Peter Dawson does not write that he and his brother shared rooms on their arrival in London, simply that initially he settled 'just behind the Kennington Theatre' where 'I spent my first six months in London'.¹⁰⁹ If his express purpose was to study singing his first objective should have been to audition immediately for the famous teacher whom C. J. Stevens had recommended: Charles Santley. At that time Santley was one of the foremost teachers in London, and, though nearing the end of his career, one of the most highly regarded baritones in England.¹¹⁰ As the influence of Santley's method has been perpetuated by Peter Dawson, a brief insight into Santley's life highlights the continuing connection between vocal practice of the nineteenth century and today.

Charles Santley was born in Liverpool in 1834 and died in London 1922, aged eighty-eight. He had studied in Milan, then in England with Garcia, master of *bel canto*, a legend among teachers. He began his career as an opera singer, 1857-1877, but from 1877 concentrated on oratorio and concerts. Although Rosenthal¹¹¹ writes 'it was generally agreed that although not possessing a naturally beautiful voice, he sang with great expression and was an especially dramatic actor', as far back as 1891 George Bernard Shaw,¹¹² when denigrating the slowness of the choral coloratura in

LONDON, via CAPE TOWN, will be dispatched from Railway Pier, Port Melbourne, at 4 p.m., on Thursday, 27th Inst. Passengers should leave Adelaide by Express on Tuesday 25th. Dalgety & Co Limited, Agents

¹⁰⁶Victorian State Archives, ships' manifests, 1902, 03.29: Mr J H Dawson and Mr P Dawson joined the *ss Afric* in Melbourne on 27 March 1902, sailed on 29th March 1902. All passengers are listed as 'Third Class' but in the *Summary* as 'Steerage', the Dawson brothers being two of '338 Persons', who equalled '315 Statute Persons'. Ship speed, verbal information, Victorian State Archive.

¹⁰⁷c/f *Arcadia*, Royal South Street Competition, 1996, 01.11

¹⁰⁸newspaper, 1951, 04.24

¹⁰⁹EMI, 1931, 04.00; Dawson, 1951, 17

¹¹⁰Rosenthal, 1980, in *New Grove*, Sir Charles Santley 1834-1922

¹¹¹Rosenthal, 1980, in *New Grove*

¹¹²Shaw, 1962: *Messiah*, 01.07.1891 in *G.B.S. on Music*, 82

Messiah, suggested the choristers use Santley 'who roused then to boundless enthusiasm by his singing of *Why do the nations*' as their model. And another reference to his status:¹¹³ 'under Thomas Chappell's management the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts were begun ... and many famous artists appeared including Charles Santley, Patti and Clara Schumann'.

In 1948, the usually precise Fred Gaisberg,¹¹⁴ who had run the Gramophone Company recording studio since its inception, leaves the impression that at that time Santley was an old man: 'in the autumn of 1902' Peter Dawson 'lost no time in placing himself under the guidance of the great baritone, the 80 year old Charles Santley'. In 1949 had he corrected himself?¹¹⁵

I remember Santley's visit to our Studio so well at the age of 70, very dapper and elegant and the delight his still fresh voice gave me. I was particularly struck with his ease of production and freedom of tone emitted.

The result:¹¹⁶

In London the Gramophone Company enticed into its studios the veteran Charles Santley ... a mint copy of '*Non piu andrai*' recorded by Santley in 1903 at the age of sixty-nine has become a collectors' item

Santley, who still had a reputation an outstanding practising baritone, was actually sixty-nine when Peter Dawson started lessons with him. He celebrated his jubilee at Albert Hall, in May 1907 and was knighted that year. Though his farewell appearance was in 1911, at the age of seventy-seven, *Columbia* brought out a recording of his *To Anthea* and *The Rosary* in 1913. He made one last appearance in 1915, when he came out of retirement to sing for a refugee benefit. This was the remarkable man who became Peter Dawson's new teacher and mentor.

The story of Peter Dawson's audition before this august practitioner appears in several amusing variants, which suggest that the maestro acknowledged the quality of the voice despite a colonial gaucheness. According to Peter Dawson, as Santley could not accept him into his studio until the end of the year, he recommended that the young Australian take preliminary lessons with F. L. Bamford, in Glasgow in the interim.¹¹⁷

The account favoured in Peter Dawson's recollections is open to question when compared with a variety of sources. After Peter Dawson's contact with the recording industry, dates can be authenticated, and the date of his marriage to Annie Mortimer Noble in 1905 is precise. Working backwards the scenario, to which his father would have more likely agreed and which would explain the absence of his brother in Kennington, was that he and his brother had set out from Australia in 1902 to visit his father's brother's family in Glasgow, where Uncle James was the master of a shipping line.¹¹⁸

¹¹³Blaikley, D., 'Ballad Concerts - Boosey & Chappell' in *New Grove*, 1980

¹¹⁴Gaisberg, in EMI, *The Voice*, January, 1948

¹¹⁵EMI, 1949, 01.00

¹¹⁶Moore, J., 1976, 86

¹¹⁷Dawson, 1951, 18

¹¹⁸i) biography, family tree, 1996, 01.21: The second son James, remained in Scotland. He

Peter Dawson acknowledges that he had lessons with the Scottish teacher, Bamford before he started with Santley, which would mean he spent May to August/September 1902 in Glasgow. But in his book he says he was there over the winter and in a 1954 radio interview admitted that 'when he landed in the Old Country to start his career, he lived for a year in Glasgow with relations'.¹¹⁹

What happened after the six months in Kennington? Peter Dawson moved to Ealing where he met his wife-to-be. He courted her for about a year and a half before marrying in May 1905. So the correct chronology appears to be that the brothers stayed with relations in Scotland in 1902; James returned to Australia and Peter Dawson arrived in Kennington in May 1903, two years before his wedding, but, being the end of the musical season in London, Santley could not commence his new teaching year until September.

Sources in general suggest that once lessons with Santley began there followed 'three years of hard work'¹²⁰ after the training with Bamford. Santley 'also arranged my first real engagement, a tour of the West of England with Mme Albani, in which he also appeared'¹²¹, in late 1903.¹²² As early as 1904 he began his recording career and took the first tentative steps in his concert career.

marriage

Peter Dawson was devoted to Nan. She was his constant companion. He proudly acknowledges the value of her advice and the part she played in supporting him through his moments of insecurity. The Australian family recognised Nan as the power behind the throne: 'he never had a secretary, Nan typed. He practiced a lot as I understood; Nan played for him. Nan was his guardian; no-one was allowed speak to him before concerts'¹²³; and Peter Dawson: 'My wife goes everywhere with me. I could not do without her'.¹²⁴ His pride and affection often shows in reports; the dedication in his autobiography sums up the implication of a long affectionate relationship: 'To my dear wife, Nan, my companion through it all'.

Until 1904, Peter Dawson's studies had been financed by his father. Peter Dawson's recollection¹²⁵ was that his father opened a renewable credit of

became a ship's captain and founder of the Rock Line of ships, which was named after the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth.

ii) Dawson, 1951, 18: My uncle, Captain James Dawson, owned the Rock Line of sailing vessels. Each of his ships was named after a well-known Scottish rock: Bass Rock, Ted Rock, Beacon, Inchcape, etc. He held the blue riband for the fastest service between London and Calcutta with his tea-clippers. (also in Adelaide newspaper, 1954, 05.27)

¹¹⁹Adelaide newspaper, 1954, 05.27 where he also sang with 'the Glasgow Abstainers Union, which held concerts in the City Hall on Saturday nights'. Album, 1902, *The Scottish Anthem Book*: a presentation copy carries the dedication Wardlow Hill Parish Church, Rev Jack, 1902, Peter Dawson, Rutherglen., which also suggests that he spent some time at that church.

¹²⁰for example: EMI, 1926, 02.00

¹²¹Dawson, 1951, 19, for comment on Albani & tour see Appendix 6

¹²²not 1904 -ref argument Appendix 6

¹²³biography, Peter Dawson's Adelaide nephew , 1993, 03.25

¹²⁴London newspaper, 1950, 03.26

¹²⁵newspaper, 1955, 04.26

£100 per annum.¹²⁶ 'When I had failed to find engagements after I had been studying for two years', writes Peter Dawson, 'my father strongly advised me to come home and rejoin the firm. Later he cut my allowance'.¹²⁷ Another report says 'three £100 credits' and the reason for the cut was his impending marriage to Nan 'who danced and sang in theatres'.¹²⁸ Three credits would have seen him through 1903, 1904, 1905. From recording information,¹²⁹ the first time Peter Dawson seems to have undertaken extensive Music Hall work, work unfamiliar to him but familiar to Nan and her family, was during 'the dead-summer season for vocalists in those early days', the summer of 1906, the summer the year after his marriage.

In Nan, Peter Dawson had found a companion who understood and supported him; someone with a theatrical background, a singer herself, who accepted his nature and in some respects, kept it under control. Nan was an active performer, whom Peter Dawson had watched at the opening of Shepherds Bush Empire,¹³⁰ during the 'eighteen months' before 'we were married'.¹³¹ Annie Mortimer Noble, a soprano, sang under the name of Annette George. She was the daughter¹³² of Thomas John Noble, who has been described¹³³ as 'the box-office manager of the famous Alhambra Theatre in Leicester Square', though in fact, at the time Peter Dawson moved from Kennington, he 'ran' the Ealing Theatre, which is 'where I met his daughter'. The marriage took place on the 5th May, 1905.¹³⁴ From many photos of family get-togethers, such as Christmas or weddings, it can be seen that the Noble family was a large extended family which embraced Peter Dawson wholeheartedly.¹³⁵ Nan's eldest brother, Tom, became a lifelong friend, adviser, and often his agent and negotiator.¹³⁶

The theatre her father managed would have been of the popular music hall variety, the opening of the Shepherds Bush Empire suggests a similar type of venue and '(Nan) suddenly remembered that when she had played the Fairy Queen in a London pantomime the previous year or so'.¹³⁷ At the time of their acquaintance Nan belonged to a lighter musical culture than

¹²⁶in 1996 terms = c. £4000 or nearly \$A10,000. The renewable credit occurs on several places, and seems reasonable as he later sought to repay the money his parents had loaned him. However, newspaper 1939, 10.31: 'Then, with £40 he (travelled) steerage from Australia to England'

¹²⁷Dawson, 1951, 24

¹²⁸newspaper, 1955, 04.26

¹²⁹Chapter 3

¹³⁰London newspaper, 1955, 05.01.

¹³¹Dawson, 1951, 24

¹³²the second eldest of four daughters, and three sons.

¹³³McMenamin, 1975, 44, taken direct from Dawson, 1951, 24

¹³⁴*Who's Who in Australia*, 1933

¹³⁵Dawson, 1956, 11.19, Last Will & Testament: Nobles were his heirs: in the event of his executrix (Constance) not living ... 'After payment of all expenses, any residue to: My nephew Jeffrey Ernest Gilbert $\frac{2}{4}$, My brother-in-law William Charles Noble $\frac{1}{4}$, My niece Sally Ann McNair $\frac{1}{4}$ '. (all Nobles)

¹³⁶on the page after the dedication page: 'My sincere thanks to Tom Noble who urged me into starting it and insisted with great patience till it was - with his help - completed.

¹³⁷Dawson, 1951, 31

that with which Peter Dawson was familiar. So, from the time of his 'first tentative steps' into the entertainment industry he was no longer alone: he entered the profession with the background of a colonial upbringing and colonial Protestant musical culture, now conjoined with the diametrically dissimilar genre of his English wife and her family.

Chapter 3

Creating the Myth

part 1: acoustic recording, 1904 -1925

The owners of the Gramophone rejoice
To hear it likened to the human voice
The owner of the Human Voice disown
Its least resemblance to the Gramophone¹

The legend of Peter Dawson's achievements stems from the most publicised aspect of his career: recording. The number of titles he recorded, the number sold, the length of his recording career, even his income appear to be of amazing, dare it be said, of mythical proportions:

- he ... calculates that he has ... sold thirteen and a half million records of one sort or another, most of them at the comforting royalty of five per cent.²
- his association with the H.M.V. organisation for over fifty years is unique in the annals of the recording industry. His recording of over three and a half thousand titles will probably never be surpassed by any artist. Calculated on a basis of proportion to total sales, there can be little doubt that his fourteen million records sold represented a higher percentage than any other recording artists³;
- his eventual total was more than 13 million sales of some 3500 titles⁴

These substantial figures: 3500, 13-14 million, 'most at royalties of 5%', 50 years, originate from record company publicity, interviews, programmes and Peter Dawson's autobiography. Yet for the American record specialist, Jim Walsh⁵, those sales figures seem 'woefully under-estimated' because 'even in the fledgling days of the phonograph industry a 5000 sale was considered the "break-even point". Any figure below that represented a loss.' Even on Walsh's break-even figure total sales would be 17,500,000 but then Walsh takes into account that Dawson 'himself said that many of his records sold in the hundreds of thousands' so he argues for a figure of 26,000,000!

If this is a more realistic figure, why did Peter Dawson and EMI settle for the lower one? Peter Dawson joined the industry at the beginning of its productive phase 'when a day's sale of a hundred records seemed stupendous⁶ and the process of making records was so slow that it would take weeks for one man to make 5000 copies of the same number. Could the industry have carried losses to maintain its place in the market? Could

¹Belloc, H, *Epigramophones*, December 1929, in *The Gramophone*, 1973, *The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1923-1973, 52

²London newspaper, 1955, 04.26

³McMenamin, 1975, 44-5

⁴Glennon, J. 1981, 245

⁵Walsh, 1961, May

⁶*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 78 (ALFRED CLARK
Sir Louis Sterling)

Peter Dawson be counting his part in an ensemble or every number on a record as separate titles? The average sales on his figures would be 3700 each if the number of titles had only been 2500 instead of 3500 - still an extraordinary number - then on Walsh's break-even point, 13 million would fit. Or could it be that the industry publicity exaggerated figures and credited artists with gargantuan achievements, which the artists also perpetuated?

When James Glennon⁷ sought to justify the figures by analysing a 'complete discography', EMI advised⁸ him that, not only had no attempt been made to complete one, but it would be quite impractical to attempt it, because 'Dawson recorded for many companies ... under many different names'. Like so many aspects of the Peter Dawson myth, the number of titles and the sales remain tantalising but unprovable. There is never an attempt to compare these figures with other artists; the figures are merely a quantity too large to be questioned and so large that the reader must think that Peter Dawson was on some celestial plain far above mere mortals. Perhaps he was, for there is unanimous agreement on his popularity and rarely a critical remark about his work: broadly, critics and biographers share Walsh's opinion that 'he has been the most important recording artist in the phonograph's 84-year history - not excluding Caruso or even Elvis Presley!⁹ Students of mythology know that behind the projection of the hero to deistic proportions there is a basis in fact, which in the telling has become exaggerated and idealised.

Though Peter Dawson may have had a high profile, he was merely a cog in an industry, an industry which began in 1877, with Thomas Edison's invention of a 'talking machine'. In these days of the rapid (rabid) spread of telecommunications, CD recordings, micro-tapes, television and computers it is worthwhile remembering that there is a commonality of origin, that each was directly or indirectly developed in competition with the other. When Bell invented the telephone, it led Edison to develop a better microphone and then his machine for recording the voice and replaying it. He made it possible for sound waves to be scratched onto a cylinder covered with tin-foil and then replayed by means of a diaphragm, which reproduced them as sound waves again, emitting them through a horn, thus augmented them into audible sound.

Because his instrument could write what it heard, he called it a 'phonograph', thinking it would be useful in offices as a dictaphone, but before long monologues, singing and other music had turned it into a vehicle for home entertainment rather than office equipment.

Although Peter Dawson was not associated with the industry until 1904, he was a product of its peculiar character which had evolved rapidly in a mere quarter of a century. The history of the industry¹⁰ may be divided into three

⁷James Glennon, *ADB*, 1981, 245 op. cit

⁸EMI, 1978, 01.16

⁹Walsh, 1961

¹⁰unless specifically noted historical information about the industry in general is a synthesis of several publications produced for the centenary: Moore, J. N., 1977, *A Matter of Records*;

sections: 1877-1898, the period of discovery, early experiment, and initial sales in USA; then, as the study is concerned with Peter Dawson's association with English companies, 1898-1925, from the foundation of *The Gramophone Company* to the introduction of electrical recording; and 1925-50, from electrical 78rpm to the appearance of slow-speed, long-playing records and tape recordings.

Edison's invention aroused much interest: by 1888 he was marketing his *Perfected Phonograph* but another company, the *Columbia Graphophone Company*, was also using his invention. Edison continued to make further improvements to his equipment while fighting to regain control of his patents. Finally, in 1895, he perfected his *Spring Motor Phonograph*¹¹, which radically changed the possibilities of his invention. The spring motor worked on the same principle as a clock: wound tightly, then released, through a series of inhibiting gears, the cylinder could be turned at an even speed. In 1896 Edison established the *National Phonograph Company* to distribute his phonographs and cylinders.

In that same year, as cylinders began to establish themselves firmly, a new competitor was about to enter the market. Fascinated by Edison's cylinder, Emile Berliner, a German emigrant, was trying to apply the principle to a flat surface. By 1888 he was able to patent a new system of recording by etching a flat zinc disc. The 'design' etched into the acid resisting coating took the form of a wavy spiral line traced by a stylus connected to the recording diaphragm. To market his invention he chose a different name, *Gramophone*, which had much the same meaning as the others¹². As the disc originally lay on a round 'table' which could only be turned by means of a hand-driven crank-shaft, it was first used commercially by a toy seller in Berlin. The conception that it was merely a toy was a criticism which stuck to the industry well into the next century, for the quality of acoustic recordings could vary considerably:

"The reason why the gramophone was at first regarded as an instrument of torture," Mr Dawson said to me, "was that only extremely loud noises could make any impression on the early recording machines. On that account the original artists selected were an auctioneer, a street lecturer, an Indian medicine man, a railway porter, and a newspaper seller."¹³

Berliner's original discs, pressed from the zinc masters, were of vulcanised rubber but, although he switched to a more reliable shellac composition in 1897, his 'toy' was unable to gain any serious foothold until the engineer, Eldridge Johnson, invented a spring motor for the Gramophone, which then changed it into a real competitor to cylinders. To market their

Read & Welch, 1976, *From tin foil to stereo*; City of London Phonographic Society, 1977, *100 Years of Recorded Sound*; Gelatt, Roland, 1977, *The fabulous phonograph*; Isom, 1977, 'Centenary of recorded sound'; Royal Scottish Museum Edinburgh, 1977, *Phonographs & Gramophones*; Chew, 1981, *Talking Machines*

¹¹ which remained on the market as the most superior cylinder machine until 1912

¹² Duden, 1963, Etymologie: from Greek phōné (sound), grámma (writing) which derives from gráph-ma (write)

¹³ newspaper, 1925, 12.21: *Making Records* (3 million to date)

invention Berliner and Johnson formed an association with an aggressive sales executive, Frank Seaman, who so saturated papers and magazines with bold advertisements that by Christmas 1898 their *National Gramophone Company of New York* could not keep up with demand.

Seaman was no ideal partner. To avoid patent obligations to Berliner, he marketed his own disc machine, the *Zonophone*, and through an injunction prevented Berliner and Johnson from selling gramophones, so Johnson was forced to go into business by himself. Because *Gramophone* was the trademark of his friend Berliner, Johnson changed his to *Victor*. He not only successfully formed an association with another promoter but improved his machines and invented the wax method of recording, which superseded zinc masters as the method of acoustic recording until 1925.

The Pathé brothers had introduced cylinders to France in 1894 under the trade name of Le Coq, but their cylinders were pantographed¹⁴ in America. Around the turn of the century the Americans turned their eyes to Europe. Edison had already set up business in London when William Barry Owens, 'an ex-lawyer turned promoter', who had worked for Seaman, formed *The Gramophone Company of London*. The literature indicates that the company with which Peter Dawson's name is associated was established in May, 1898 'with a working capital of £3000 and the exclusive rights to sell gramophone merchandise throughout Europe', but the EMI archivist advises that 'the company actually started trading in August 1897'.¹⁵ Its talking machine was *Berliner/Johnson Improved Model* of 1898 found on *His Master's Voice* labels. Parts were imported and assembled in England, but recordings were made in England. Headquarters were 31 Maiden Lane, just off the Strand.¹⁶

In July the Gaisberg brothers, Fred and Will, who had worked with American companies, joined Owens' Gramophone Company as his sound engineers. Fred converted a small room in Maiden Lane into a recording studio, but, because of possible difficulties with British unions, the one-sided masters he made were pressed by Berliner's brother, Joseph, in a factory erected for that purpose in Hannover.¹⁷

From the beginning *The Gramophone Company of London* had several reasons for its success: the first, the most basic, was the steadily improving advantage of the disc over the original cylinder. Next was the effect of American salesmanship on the British market, which has changed the face of advertising since. Owens was a promoter. Owens was a salesman. He introduced his products 'with a minimum of social punctilio'¹⁸: his 'shock tactics', his 'frontal assault', included 'full pages in London newspapers' with 'none of the customary British reserve in his layouts and copy'. A

¹⁴a pantograph was a copying machine.

¹⁵EMI, 1996, 11.26, Manager, EMI Archives to author.

¹⁶The Strand, running from Trafalgar Square past Charing Cross to Fleet Street was an elegant area. Among other buildings The Savoy Hotel and Doyly Carte's Savoy Theatre where the G & S operas were performed.

¹⁷Record information was initially etched into centre of the disc.

¹⁸Gelatt, 1977, 86

third positive attribute was the artistic sensibility of Fred Gaisberg, who remained the artistic power behind the commercial throne throughout the development of The Gramophone Co up to and beyond World War 2. The extraordinary influence of Fred Gaisberg, who had worked in the infant industry as early as 1891¹⁹ as a pianist and recording engineer, may be judged from the list of famous musicians, who celebrated his retirement in 1939.²⁰ By the end of 1898 Gaisberg had already made his first recordings in London and then travelled to the Continent with his zinc-recording equipment. By 1900 the Gramophone Company already had a catalogue of 5000 records²¹. But the first entirely satisfactory recordings were those he made of Caruso in 1902²².

In 1900 the Gramophone Company was able to buy the rights to Johnson's paper labels and his secret wax process²³. Some early Gramophone records carry the identification 'G&T', that is, *The Gramophone & Typewriter Company*, for salesman Owens misread the future of the recording industry: he joined the ranks of those who believed it was merely a craze, so he decided to diversify. The idea could possibly have proved sound had he not chosen the *Lambert* typewriter, an ungainly machine, which only caused the Company financial problems, and forced his resignation in 1904.²⁴

The success of both cylinders and discs drew a number of competing companies to London, and despite talk of exclusive contracts with the Gramophone Company, Peter Dawson and his young colleagues worked for all of them. For the Gramophone Company competition had come from *Zonophone* with its own group of celebrity artists, which were in fact much the same as the Gramophone list, so in 1903 the Gramophone Company acquired *Zonophone*, using that trade-mark until the 1930s for its low-priced discs. At that time there were about a dozen companies based in London. Cylinders were more ubiquitous than discs. The dominant company headed by the old master, the most prestigious, the best quality and the most expensive²⁵ was *Edison*, not to be confused with its next rival, *Edison Bell*. Though not normally mentioned,²⁶ other cylinders on which Peter Dawson recorded were: *Sterling*, *White*, *Imperial*, *Star*, *Clarion*, *Pathé*, and the discs: *Nicole*, *Odeon*, *Sovereign*, *Rena*, and as *Rena* was copied from *Columbia* masters, he must have recorded for *Columbia* early on. For years,

¹⁹Gelatt, 1977, 27: 'by 1891 Columbia had already issued a catalogue of its recordings, thin in format and only three pages long' include thirty-six selections of 'John AtLee, the famous whistler' with piano accompaniments by Professor Gaisberg', then a lad in his teens.

Gelatt, 1977, 60: 'Fred Gaisberg's name crops up in the '90s recording an obscure Italian tenor singing cut versions (truncated) of big, popular arias'.

²⁰ Appendix 7

²¹Moore, J., 1977, 76

²²Moore, J., 1977, 77: Gaisberg improvised a studio in a hotel in Milan, where the young tenor was performing. Caruso sales were the highest for many years. see also footnote 9.

Percy Wilson, *Reproducing the Records*, in *The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 38: 'it has long been a point of debate as to whether Caruso made the Gramophone or the Gramophone made Caruso'.

²³ Moore, J., 1977, 77: for \$15000 (= £3000)

²⁴& *Typewriter* dropped from company name in 1908

²⁵1/3

²⁶from Walsh, J, 1961, *Hobbies*, January - June record reviews

there was to be a lively contest between phonograph and gramophone. Despite Gaisberg's improvements Edison's reproduced sounds were of better quality: 'viewed side by side, the gramophone seemed a poor relation, the phonograph a bejewelled *grande dame*'.²⁷ But slowly the Gramophone Company gained the ascendancy: by the First World War most of the cylinder companies were defunct.

The interest in the talking machine was not restricted to USA and England: the Gramophone Company, for example, had branches throughout Europe and agents elsewhere overseas, including Australia. At turn of the century opera singers were at the peak of their glory; it was the envied vocal profession. Singers like Adele Patti, Nellie Melba, Lilli Lehmann, Tamango, Maurel, Battastini, Plançon were 'objects of adoration', so it was in the commercial interest of the talking machine companies to record them. While Gaisberg toured the closer European houses, the Gramophone Company representative in Russia developed the idea by not only using leading Russian opera stars - among them the young Chaliapin - but by creating a special identification label, and selling these exclusive recordings at a higher price. Thus the *Red Label* was born. When the first *Red Label* catalogue appeared in September 1902 it contained only opera singers,²⁸ 'Red Labels established the Company and its trademark, gave it status and pushed it well to the forefront of the talking machine industry'.²⁹

Even then, this was not exclusive enough for some opera stars: in 1903, when Will Gaisberg recorded the *tenore robusto* who had created Verdi's *Otello*, he insisted on his own special *Tamango Label*. At that time normal 7" records cost 2/6, the 10" 'concert' cost 5/-, the exclusive *Red Label*, double again at 10/-, making it a luxury; but the super-exclusive *Tamango Label* was £1: eight times the cost of a normal disc. When it went on sale in 1904 dealers were told that 'the £1 record has raised the whole tone of the gramophone business'. This spurred our famous Australian diva to demand her own special *Melba Label* which sold for one guinea - one shilling more!

This concern with exclusivity does not seem to fit with the mentality of popularist entrepreneurs. Despite this talk of 'status', 'then as now the bulk of record sales were confined to ephemeral, popular music'³⁰ and into this atmosphere of ephemeral, popular music stepped the young Australian bass, Peter Dawson, in 1904.³¹

Peter Dawson's recording career could be divided into four periods; the first or initial period was from 1904-1914. Whether 'actual concert platform appearances would always remain secondary'³² or whether Peter Dawson

²⁷ Gelatt, 1977, 43

²⁸ except for the conductor, Raphael Kubilek,

²⁹ Moore, J., 1977, 86

³⁰ a grudging remark from Moore, J., 1977, 86, who prefers to follow the Company's and Gaisberg's association with famous classical artists.

³¹ all Peter Dawson's contracts have the City Road address. The Gramophone Company had moved to more commodious premises at No.21 City Road, E.C. in the summer of 1902. Moore, J., 1977, 74: 'The new recording studio was an enormous advance over the old basement room in Maiden Lane'

³² Moore, J., 1977, 89

'considered it [recording] a mere supplement to his concert work'³³, the impression remains for most that 'recording Peter Dawson marked the beginning of a new phenomenon - a career that could be made and maintained almost entirely through recordings'.³⁴ The beginnings of a career are arguably the most interesting as a performer, unsure of the market, turns this way and that, taking every opportunity to establish oneself. It appears that Peter Dawson really was in-the-right-place-at-the-right-time to take advantage of his natural talents. In 1904 the famous opera stars might have been flying high but a twenty-two years old colonial could not afford any delusions of grandeur.

It would be much easier to accept the romantic versions of Peter Dawson's first encounter with the recording industry than to test them, but it is a truism that 'most performers are less than 100 per cent accurate when they try to recollect details of their recording careers'.³⁵ Peter Dawson, like his fellow 'famous' artists, was not only a product of his ability, he was a product of The Gramophone Company's aggressive publicity machine.

But the publicity does not deny that Peter Dawson first auditioned, unsuccessfully, for a cylinders company. If Peter Dawson is to be believed, the venerable J. E. Hough,³⁶ head of Edison Bell, actually knocked on his front door and invited him to audition. Although the audition was not successful, the sound engineer, Russell Hunting,³⁷ who recognised his potential, 'gives the wink' to his friend, Fred Gaisberg. As Peter Dawson recalls:³⁸

I remember as though it were yesterday my first audition for 'His Master's Voice'. I sang *Long ago in Alcalá, Tra la la, Tra la la* and Fred Gaisberg played the piano for me, and his brother Will made the record.

The audition led to 'his first record', 'a popular hit called *Navajo*, which appeared in the 1904 catalogue'.³⁹

But how accurate is this version of the beginnings of Peter Dawson's '50 year association' with the fledgling recording industry? Through Stevens and through the church Peter Dawson's background would have been hymns, sacred music, oratorio and other quality repertoire. With this classical background followed by lessons with Santley, Peter Dawson would have been predisposed to aim for the opera house or the concert platform not the unimportant, infantile recording medium. But when he started to court Annie Noble he was introduced into a family whose affiliations and sympathy lay with much lighter musical literature, a family which was also

³³Walsh, 1961, February

³⁴Moore, J., 1977, 89

³⁵Walsh, 1961. Similarly Ponder, 1928: The publisher, Harrop, complained that Ponder's biography of Dame Clara Butt was too bland, too clean, because the singer had taken great pains to put herself in a perfect light and had been very careful not to offend any other artist.

³⁶had been well-known in music halls as 'the Lancashire Laddie'

³⁷Gelatt, 1977, 30: 'unquestionably the most popular pre-1900 recording artist was the monologist Russell Hunting, originator of the famous Casey series'.

³⁸occurs in Dawson, 1951 but elsewhere, such as EMI, 1931, 04.00, *The Voice* but in this case, EMI, *The Voice* 1949, 01.00

³⁹Fred Gaisberg in EMI, *The Voice*, 1948, 01.00

involved in the cylinder industry.

It has already been noted that Nan's elder brother, Tom, was a close friend and promoter of Peter Dawson throughout his life. That Tom was a recording engineer is not so widely known. In 1907 he was featured in an Edison Bell advertisement as 'Mr. T. J. Noble, who has been one of the experts of National Company Ltd. at their British and some of their continental laboratories',⁴⁰ and 'he also worked for Edison, and later under Russell Hunting, and was assistant Pathé recording supervisor throughout Europe'.⁴¹ The family connection extends to Yolande Noble,⁴² with whom Peter Dawson later made some light-hearted recordings. As none of the Noble girls were named Yolande, there is the possibility that it was a 'stage name' and does not exclude the possibility that it could have been Nan - whose usual professional name was Annette George - nor the possibility that the two met at a recording session. Some have speculated that Peter Dawson's path might have been different, that he would have found a place in opera, had not been introduced to this new medium by his enthusiastic in-laws. It would appear that the Australian family shared this view too, for his grand-niece writes:⁴³

I can tell you why Uncle Peter did not become involved in opera. He married Nan Noble whose family were producing gramophone [sic] records in London. They persuaded him to make records and give concerts. Today Uncle Peter would have been a very wealthy man but in those days he was not paid very much.

From a combination of EMI archival records, 230 titles in Jim Walsh's diligent (1962) collation of information from the phonograph magazine, *The Talking Machine News* until 1933, then from *The Gramophone*, the circa 200 titles in the HMV catalogue, 1934/35, and circa 200 titles in Peter Burgis' (1981) *Ambassador of Song*, it is possible to follow Peter Dawson's recording career quite accurately.⁴⁴

The Gramophone & Typewriter Company obviously had a commercial interest in suppressing detail which did not promote its own product. The audition for Edison Bell must have actually been successful, because the first mention of Peter Dawson's name is on a cylinder, *To my first love*, under the name of **Leonard Dawson**! The story goes that, as the recording was also intended for the American market, **Peter Dawson** seemed a little prosaic: it was also the name of a Scotch whisky which was popular in America. Later name changes appear to be associated with avoidance of contractual obligations but at this case it appears to have been cosmetic. He

⁴⁰Walsh, 1961, April

⁴¹Walsh, 1961, May

⁴²Walsh, 1961, April: Yolande Noble - PD sister-in-law- a talented comedian - some of her Edison and Columbia records were sold in the States

⁴³Bennet, of Hackney Rd, St. Peters, 1991, 05.01: 'He was my great uncle, my grandmothers brother ...'

⁴⁴sources abbreviated as: hmv = HMV 1933/34; W = Walsh, 1962; B = Burgis, 1981; hug = Hughes, PDAS, c.1985, emi = EMI. Walsh dates are review dates, Burgis dates are recording dates.

appears as Leonard on Edison Bell posters during 1904 recording, among others, *Navajo*, an Indian/Calypso pop song, which he says was his first commercial recording for The Gramophone Company. In December dealers displayed a 'musical menu' with 'Item 1: Soup: L. Dawson with Morse's great hit *Blue Bell*', but in 1905 he becomes Peter Dawson.⁴⁵

Leonard Dawson's *Navajo*, cylinder No. 6398 with orchestra, was recorded in June/July and reviewed in December, at the same time as Peter Dawson singing *Navajo* with Fred Gaisberg at the piano, recorded as G&T 2-24479 on 15th August. On 24th October he recorded the rollicking *Down at the Old Bull and Bush* with piano on the cheaper Zonophone label. Gaisberg writes:⁴⁶

Within a few weeks I had him making popular, comic and serious ballads, oratorio and opera arias, Gilbert and Sullivan, solos, duets, trios, quartets, chorus, etc ... The velvety quality of his well-produced voice, his ability to throw pathos, tears, laughter and drama into it, his quickness at reading, musicianship and contagious good humour made him a recorder's dream

So Peter Dawson began work well-nigh concurrently for both companies. A review of *The Bandolero* 'issued in USA as a Blue Amberol as well as a wax Amberol cylinder' indicates that he recorded for Edison too, not to mention the cylinders: *Nicole*, *Star* - produced by the Phonograph Exchange Co but suspected of being dubbed from good brands - and *Sterling* - produced by Sterling & Hunting, that is Louis Sterling, who had been manager of British Zonophone until it was acquired by the Gramophone Company, and Russell Hunting, who had left Edison Bell to start his own business.

The reoccurrence of the names, Hunting, Sterling, Alfred Clark, Will and Fred Gaisberg is indicative of the flux of the expanding industry.⁴⁷ It is interesting that these 'British' companies never lost their American character, for these peripatetic Americans, who were all friends, ruled the industry until 1939 and beyond. In the beginning, they all agreed that, as discs and cylinders used different machines, their artists could discreetly work in both mediums. The friends entered into what Fred Gaisberg described as a 'secret understanding': 'I exchanged with them certain non-contract artists, and we worked together to our mutual benefit'.⁴⁸

Already by 1905 the young bass was a regular with the Gramophone Company as well as cylinder companies. *The Bandolero*, a popular song in ballad style, one of Peter Dawson's most famous songs, appeared in January on an Edison Bell cylinder. *Down at the Old Bull & Bush*, which had been a huge hit in USA, was so successful in England that Peter Dawson recorded

⁴⁵Walsh, 1961

⁴⁶Fred Gaisberg, EMI, *The Voice*, 1948, 01.00

⁴⁷Louis Sterling is a good example. When he arrived in London, he initially lived in the Gaisberg household. He became manager of *British Zonophone* but it was soon acquired by G. Co. He went into partnership with Russell Hunting, who had left Edison Bell to start his own *Russell Hunting Record Co* (cylinders) which made *Sterling* records. It later became *Sterling & Hunting*. But the cylinder business failed so Sterling brought out *Rena* discs which were pressed from *Columbia* masters, before consolidating with *Columbia*. Sterling ran *Columbia* until it merged with the Gramophone Company in 1931 to form EMI.

⁴⁸Moore, J., 1977, 90 (typewritten article on John McCormack)

it for Edison Bell, Gramophone and Zonophone. More in line with the quality associated with his name today was the gentle Shakespeare song, *Blow, Blow thou Winter Wind* which it is hard to imagine as a raging best-seller. A row of other 'Peter Dawson' songs appear, those songs which became associated with his name: *The Gallants of England*, and *A Jovial Monk am I* on Gramophone; on Edison Bell *The Good Rhine Wine* and *Simon the Cellarer*, and another American hit, which was in demand in Australia during the 1909 tour, *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree*. About this time too *Tommy Lad* appears, of which it is said that every singing student had the record and a copy of the music.⁴⁹

On Edison Bell he is heard with the tenor, Wilfred Virgo, in that wonderfully stirring, sentimental, ultimately Victorian *Excelsior*, which can still bring an audience as effectively to its feet as Bizet's *In the Depths of the Temple* from *The Pearl Fishers*. On G&T GC 4381 he sings Mephistopheles to Alice Esty's Marguerite and John Harrison's Faust, in the finale to Gounod's opera.

To repeat a point: the examples may appear to infer that Peter Dawson only had solo contracts but in his original contracts he is part of a male ensemble, all of whom were occasional soloists. Virgo, the tenor, Ernest Pike,⁵⁰ the baritone, Stanley Kirkby, and Peter Dawson appear with Arthur Gilbert as the Minster Singers for Gramophone and the Meister Singers for Edison Bell.⁵¹ One the most popular Melba stories concerns a recording in the tiny City studio on 4 September, 1905, when the meeting of the tyro Dawson and the tyrant Melba produced the remark about Adelaide being the city of Parsons, Pubs and Prostitutes. Peter Dawson was the bass in a male trio backing her in *The Old Folks at Home*,⁵² the others being Stanley Kirkby and Ernest Pike, who provoked an embarrassing dressing down from Melba on that occasion. Those initial years in the cramped City recording studios were the foundation of the productive years that made Peter Dawson and many of his mates legendary. They were taking part in a revolution.

The variety of styles and number of companies Peter Dawson sang for is an indication of the growth in demand for recordings and the flux in competition. The decision to offer Peter Dawson⁵³ his first annual contract is recorded in the Board Minutes of the Gramophone Company, 11 October, 1905. That the company wanted to ensure his availability is an indicator of the demand for material which Peter Dawson could record. This contract was either for eighteen months from November, 1905 or a year from April 1906 until the first detailed continuing contract available: April, 1907.

Peter Dawson may have signed a contract with the Gramophone Company, but the arrangement between Gaisberg and his friends allowed more eclectic choices. In January, 1906 the 1905 recording for Edison of *The Redemption*⁵⁴

⁴⁹EMI, 1937, 08.00, *The Voice*. EMI, 1939, 04.19: 'How about announcing and singing one of the first songs you recorded, such as "The Bedouin Love Song", "A Jovial Monk am I" or "Tommy Lad"'

⁵⁰ with whom Peter Dawson sang hundreds of duets

⁵¹Walsh, 1961, March

⁵²not *My Old Kentucky Home* as Moore quoting Gaisberg

⁵³EMI, 1905, 10.11: also 'John Harrison and Miss Gwladys Roberts'

⁵⁴'Peter Dawson' style ballads: almost any song of a serious or sentimental nature.

received a typical 'Peter Dawson' review: 'an impressive sacred song ably rendered in Peter Dawson's rich bass voice'. Lauded in similar vein was his first duet with a woman: *We parted on the shore* with the contralto, Esther Cadman. Peter Dawson's recordings rarely received anything other than praise, which is the clearest indication that he always had the singular ability to produce what both the recorders and the listener wanted to hear.

Although he sang anonymously, he is recognisable on a *Colonial!* cylinder, No. 172, with a sentimental popular song, *The Singer was Irish*; but as Peter Dawson he sang the American Civil War song, *Tramp Tramp Tramp*, a duet, *The Moon hath raised her lamp above* with Virgo, and 'the raging hit of the year', *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree*, which was in demand when he reached Australia in 1909, for Edison Bell cylinders.

G&T, the Gramophone's serious discs, featured him in *The Admiral's Broom* and the beautiful *Sincerity*, which encapsulates all those qualities associated with his name. He was also able to enjoy a lifetime predilection with six hymns, the last two as duets with Ernest Pike,⁵⁵ and his first operatic venture, *O du mein holder Abendstern* from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, but in English as *O Star of Eve*. On 21 August he was part of 'Sullivan's Operatic Party', recording 'the complete *Mikado*' in the crowded City Road studio. As per contract, he sang solos, duets and in the chorus:

<i>Miya Sama</i>	with Amy Augarde
<i>The Criminal Cried</i>	Augarde & chorus
<i>There is beauty in the bellow of the blast</i>	Augarde
<i>See how the fates their gifts allot</i>	in the chorus
<i>A more humane Mikado</i>	solo

On Zonophone, the cheaper Gramophone Company disc, there are some good solid numbers: *The West's asleep*, *Bantry Bay*, *The Memory of the Dead*, *Clare's Dragoons*, *A Nation Once Again*. *The Singer was Irish* - no doubt with an Irish accent - appears here too, another duet with Pike, and in November he recorded a cowboy song, *Wrap me up in my old stable jacket*, and a curious *Beautiful birds sing on* with the well-known whistler, Alf Holt, making appropriate bird noises.

Pathé discs - No. 90143 *That old sunny window*, the same quality as 'Apple Tree' - are never mentioned by Dawson, nor are a mixed series of cylinders for the *White Cylinder Company*. James H. White 'was a monologist who made records for Edison in USA',⁵⁶ went to London as Edison's manager, but later set up his own company. There are a couple of serious Peter Dawson numbers, and tenor/baritone duets, including the very popular *The Moon hath raised her lamp above* from *The Lily of Killarney* this time with Tom Childs.⁵⁷ For *White* Peter Dawson indulged his comic flare: under the pseudonym of Will Danby⁵⁸ singing *Its a different girl again*,

⁵⁵*God be with you, I am praying for you, I love to tell the story, Let the lower lights be burning, I need thee every hour* (duet with Pike), *Shall we meet beyond the river* unison with Pike

⁵⁶Walsh, 1961, March

⁵⁷As this number had appears above on Edison Bell with Wilfred Virgo, Virgo and Childs could be the same person.

⁵⁸not Frank Danby as he says in his book!

Waltz me around again, Willie and *Cheer me up Mary*. and with the bird imitator, who also does animal impressions, *A Barnyard Serenade* and *The Punch & Judy Show*. Peter Dawson sings a comic duet with Arthur Gilbert, and Arthur Gilbert also joins 'Hector Grant' in *Jingles, Jokes & Rhymes*.

How and when Peter Dawson came to choose the guise of Hector Grant, a Scottish music-hall singer,⁵⁹ has enjoyed the embellishment of years of anecdote. To finance his studies, Peter Dawson tells us, he received a regular sum, £100 annually, from his father, but in response to the announcement of his engagement at age twenty-two his father's wrote that if he wanted such unnecessary responsibilities he could fend for himself. Although his recording activities suggest a reliable income by the time he married in May 1905, Peter Dawson claims that he was not earning enough to see him and Nan over the 'dry' summer period.

The name, Hector Grant, is usually lumped in with his other recording pseudonyms, but Peter Dawson actually dressed up as this character. Peter Dawson was not only an amiable person, he was also inclined 'to pull your leg all the time',⁶⁰ and was not above making comic records. These character traits, coupled with his enjoyment of showing off the Scotch dialect inherited from his parents, led him to imitate Harry Lauder, later Sir Harry, 'a youngish Scot who had recently come into the limelight with his inimitable combination of balladry and Highland parody'⁶¹.

Photographs of family parties show Peter Dawson dressed in his Scottish rig-out, so there is a suspicion that, like many second generation Scots, he had a kilt for festive occasions. Both Peter Dawson and Fred Gaisberg claim that the initial impersonation occurred as a prank in the Gramophone studios. Moore's version infers that it had taken place already in 1904:

The continuing demand for his records by 1904 made him a frequent visitor to City Road. The indefatigable Peter Dawson had quickly spotted a good thing, as Fred Gaisberg was soon to realise.

Peter is no respecter of persons and under the name of 'Hector Grant' he recorded, in perfect imitation, Harry Lauder's entire repertoire ... (Gaisberg, *The Voice*, Winter 1948, p.3)

and Peter Dawson's version:⁶²

At the Gramophone Company one day I gave an imitation of Lauder singing *I love a Lassie*. I was astonished at the reaction among the recording staff. Fred Gaisberg, the chief, came up to me excitedly and said: "Peter, can you do any more like that? I mean, can you sing Scottish?" I was amused at the way the little American put it, and answered, "Yes, of course. I can sing all his songs, including *Stop yer ticklin' Jock* and *We parted on the shore*. Don't forget I am a Scot by birth."

A little later he asked me what I thought of the idea of singing Lauder's songs for the Zonophone Company under another name. In response to my argument that it might ruin my future if it became known, I was assured that

⁵⁹Dawson, 1951, 32: photo of Peter Dawson as Hector Grant

⁶⁰biography, nephews, 1996, 01.21

⁶¹Moore, J, 197, 89

⁶²Dawson, 1951, 42

no one would suspect that a singer of Lauder's rollicking Scottish songs could be Peter Dawson. I promised them a decision within twenty-four hours. At home chatting to my wife, we both agreed that with a lean summer ahead it would help with our finances. And so I recorded Lauder's songs. They were a great success ...

so much so, adds Peter Dawson, that when the Gramophone Company actually ran out of Lauder songs, he was obliged to compose some Hector Grant songs himself.

There is enough recording evidence to assert that, as the initial records were reviewed in January 1906, the reign of Hector Grant began in late 1905, but not with the Gramophone Company, not with Edison Bell, but with the doyen Edison cylinders company. The recordings could have occurred subsequent to a tour of the music-halls in the summer of 1905. Peter Dawson claims that his father-in-law, a music-hall manager, was instrumental in finding him the job as a send-up of Lauder. Kilted, bearded and with a thick Scots accent, the masquerade was so successful that it led to recordings not only of pirated Harry Lauder songs but his own, among them *Sandy You're a Dandy*, *My Hee'lan' Fancy*⁶³ and *Lassie dinna sigh for me*. - but Hector Grant never appeared in music-hall again.

The facts suggest that there may have been an alternative reason for the creation of Hector Grant. It could be that Edison wanted to cash in on the success of Lauder, but could not get him to contravene his obligations to the Gramophone Company, so, because of his known Scots accent and comic abilities, young Dawson was chosen to record the songs in his stead. As there is plenty of evidence of piracy at the time⁶⁴ and plenty of evidence that Dawson and his colleagues appeared under different names with different firms, singing under a Scottish name would not appear to be breaking faith with the Gramophone Company or anybody else. To promote the songs, Edison then sent Peter Dawson in his disguise on a promotional tour of the music halls in the summer of 1906 only.

The success of Hector Grant is indicated by the number of firms which then brought out Hector Grant records. Edison cylinders⁶⁵ noted for 1906 were: *Lassie dinna sigh for me*, *Foo the Noo*, *Tomorrow will be Friday*, *Tickle Geordie*, *I wish I had someone to love me*, but he also appeared on Edison Bell: *Lassie dinna sigh for me*, *Tickle Geordie*, *Safest of the family*; on Imperial: *I love a lassie*; on White: *Lassie dinna sigh for me*, *We parted on the shore*; and on Zonophone discs: *Jean O'Neill*, *I love a lassie*, *Foo the Noo*, *She's ma daisy*. But the most popular Hector recording was a 1907 number, *John, John, put your trousers on*, which Peter Dawson is supposed

⁶³Burgis, 1981; Brisbane, 1991, 157: a photo of a sheet-music cover of *Sandy You're a Dandy* 'Written, Composed and Sung by Hector Grant'. On the cover a drawing of Peter Dawson as Hector Grant and another of 'Hector' punching a toff on the nose. Burgis: recorded July 1907 Z X-42627. NFSA MS5030, sheet music folder O, PD mss, *My Hee'lan' Fancy*, W&M Hector Grant.

⁶⁴this theme not developed here but ref Boosey 1931, 145 necessity of pushing through Copyright Act 1911; Dawson, 1951, Marsh, 1959, 11.02: *The Price of a Song*, and footnote Dawson, 1955, 04.26 following

⁶⁵Apart from the audition with Edison Bell, cylinder companies are never mentioned biographically by Peter Dawson or The Gramophone Company

to have recorded continuously for a week. The last review of Hector Grant is in October, 1908 on Edison Bell 'twins',⁶⁶ where Hector Grant sang popular tunes of the day *Meet me Jenny when the sun goes down* and *If those lips could only speak*. There could be many reasons why Peter Dawson decided to get rid of his alter ego: perhaps the fashion had ebbed; he may have come under pressure from the Gramophone Company; or he may have felt it was detrimental to his serious ambition, a concert career, because in 1908 he received his first invitation to tour Australia.

The time taken to record sufficient copies of *John, John* requires an explanation of the method and circumstances of recording in 1906/07. 'John, John, John, go and put your Troosers on', as Peter Dawson refers to it,⁶⁷ was being sung by the comedian Billy Williams for 'another record company', was sweeping England like an epidemic, and Edison Bell were quick to seek a share of the spoils.⁶⁸ The wax master cylinders could not produce many records so Peter Dawson had to stand in front of the recording horn hour after hour, singing the same song over and over again, for five consecutive days from 10am - 1pm, then 2.15pm - 5pm, to produce the quantity required.

Even though there had been several stages in the evolution of the talking machine from 'only extremely loud noises could make any impression on the early recording machines' to this point, 'Dawson says he had to sing songs over and over', so 'cylinders were not yet being made 'by the moulded process',⁶⁹ a more efficient form of multiple copying.

Recording techniques in those early days were very primitive. Despite advertisements praising the purity of the reproduction, customers of the new-fangled toy expected only a fragment of the original. Admiring 'the perfect records of today' in 1973,⁷⁰ Alfred Clark, Managing Director of the Gramophone Company, reflected that 'the early days of the gramophone now begin to take on the atmosphere of a fairy story'. Having grown with the industry from its infancy in the USA, he could remember:

when there were only half a dozen male singers who could record well;
when it was impossible to make a record of a female voice or a violin;
when only three records were made each time the artists sang (if a dealer ordered 12 the singer sang the song 4 times);
when the business so increased that one artist sang the same song over and

⁶⁶ Walsh, 1961, April: 'double sided discs! which were still a rarity; after a brief career they were swallowed up by Zonophone. Edison Bell improved its cylinders but soon gave up the rollers in favour of discs as it could no longer compete with Edison, which introduced its four-minute Amberols late 1908.'

⁶⁷ Dawson, 1951, 33, but newspaper, 1947, 08.26: *2500 Songs in Wax*, he often sang the same song six hours a day for three weeks, he tells me, in order to make sufficient matrices.

⁶⁸ Dawson in London newspaper, 1955, 04.26: 'But everybody did it [pirating]. Pirated sheet music used to be hawked in the streets. Publishers would knock the pirates down and tear up their stocks. Billy Williams once threatened to punch me in the nose but never quite got around to it.'

⁶⁹ observation by Walsh, 1961, February

⁷⁰ *The Gramophone Jubilee Book 1923-1973*, 78 in 'Forty Years of the Gramophone' by Alfred Clark, Managing Director of the Gramophone Company in an interview which appeared in December 1929.

over again, all day long;
when we first began to copy cylinder records (could make up to 50 from one master);
when I heard a disc record for the first time;
when disc records were made on zinc plates by an etching process;
when the first gramophone records were recorded on wax instead of zinc;
when the first spring motor built for the phonograph weighed 300 pounds;
when the taper tone-arm was invented;⁷¹
when the sound-box was invented.

By the first decade of the twentieth century many of these early problems had been overcome; women recorded regularly, although strings were still a problem. Fred Gaisberg articulates the technical limitations for discs precisely:⁷²

In some ways acoustic recording flattered the voice. The top frequencies were triple C - 2088 vibrations per second - and the low remained at E - 164 vibrations per second. Voices and stringed instruments (especially stringed instruments) were confined rigidly within these boundaries. although the human voice perceives from 30 to 15000 vibrations per second, and musical sounds range from 60 to 8000 vibrations.

A letter from the Gramophone Company agents in Sydney in 1906, suggesting Peter Dawson record *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep* ⁷³ carried negative comments about the quality of women's voices on other recordings. The richness of a voice, the complexity of the tone, is dependent on 'overtones', the upper partials of all sounds. Triple C (c'''), the 'high C' of the soprano, would not be the highest notes possible for singers like Patti or Melba. The highest upper partials would disappear in the highest voices⁷⁴ so the recording range available for acoustic recording favoured lower voices. Peter Dawson's lowest note is reported to be E; his consistent high note, F (f''), would be comfortably in the middle of the recording range.

Cylinder techniques appear to have been slightly different: 'one master cylinder would yield only a limited number of pantographed duplicates': Edison recording engineers in the late 1890s - and presumably later in England - would make 'five master cylinders at each performance' and each master would 'produce at least twenty-five duplicates before the original impressions wore out', that is, 125 cylinders for sale per take. But if a singer recorded all day, how many takes would that be?

Chislett,⁷⁵ writing for EMI circa 1985, reports that, when Peter Dawson made

⁷¹as the tracks on a disc spirals into the centre, the arm holding the needle would be pulled inwards at ever increasing speed, which in turn pushed the pitch of the sound up. It was a significant advancement when this problem was finally eradicated.

⁷²Moore, J., 1977, 173-75

⁷³EMI, 1906, 07.17: 'it is quite likely that a suitable opportunity may occur to have this done'. He did record it.

⁷⁴(author) One of the deficiencies of recording is the inability to catch all the partials in the more complex timbres.

⁷⁵recording, c.1985: notes to EMI collection, c.1985, *Peter Dawson sings opera*, but taken from Dawson, 1933, *The Gramophone*: 'A song had to be sung over and over again to twelve machines, grouped in fours on three shelves. Thus twelve records were made ... One mistake

records for Edison Bell in 1904, the wax cylinders, which had 'a playing time of two minutes', were made twelve at a time by singing 'into a battery of twelve horns each leading to a record', that is, each record was recorded directly and individually. If Peter Dawson's going rate was 5/- a round⁷⁶ and his income for the week was £75,⁷⁷ then he made 300 rounds in the week.⁷⁸

Making a wax master disc was different. From Peter Dawson's account of his audition there seemed to be only one funnel: 'sang into the little funnel ... someone laid a hand on his shoulder and pushed him closer to or farther from the horn'⁷⁹. Photos of the Gramophone Company studio show that only one horn was used, and only one master was made until a recording of *Pirates of Penzance* in 1929. The incident in the Melba/Pike/Dawson story of 1905 arose because Melba and the trio had to crowd around the one recording horn and bellow into it - irritating enough without the egocentric super-star charisma of the protagonist - and Moore writes that in duets or ensembles there was a constant tussle for being closest to horn. The wax too was temperamental: to get a good take 'may take a whole day, although the music played may occupy no more than one side of a record'; 'often as many as six Master discs are made before the artists and technical staff agree that there are no imperfections in the performance'.⁸⁰

The review of even two years of Peter Dawson's career indicates that the General Managers of the talking-machine companies believed that the money was to be made in music for the masses. One altruistic firm, British Sonogram, which sought to set a popular song against a classical piano piece, had 'such a poor grasp of the average record buyers psychology' that it 'obviously ... wasn't long for this world'. British Sonogram was bankrupt within a few months.⁸¹

To be viable a talking machine company needed bulk sales; to steadily increase its market share it needed to improve quality and identify repertoire which would sell. Red Labels and the super-exclusive status labels not only raised the profile of the Gramophone Company but also insinuated that all Gramophone artists were of the highest quality, although a vivid imagination was needed to translate the poor, scratchy quality of discs and cylinders into the quality of the music hall or concert hall. The talking machines and records sold because of their novelty.

It appears to be the characteristic of successful salespersons that they are

and twelve records were spoiled'

⁷⁶Walsh, 1961, February, probably from Meadmore 1935 Peter Dawson interview

⁷⁷Dawson, 1951, 33

⁷⁸= an average of 60 a day. A normal day was 2 x 3 hours, (which means 10 an hour = one every 6 minutes. If there were twelve horns = 720 records a day, or 3600 for the week - if there were no rejects. Exaggerated?

⁷⁹Walsh, 1961, February quoting Meadmore, 1935.

⁸⁰newspaper, n.d., (but text suggest may have stemmed from Peter Dawson interview c.1931), Roger Pilgrim, *Frozen Music In The Making, Secrets of Gramophone Recording*. Moore, G, 1962, *Am I Too Loud*: [c.1921] session then as now three hours but often two or more... solving tonal and balance problems

⁸¹Walsh, 1961, April

sensitive to the broad public taste. They sought out every popular nook and cranny: hymns, G&S, music hall songs, popular American songs, cowboy songs, patriotic ballads, popular operatic arias. American advertising came into its own: it inferred that the purchaser was a judge of quality, that the performer of such numbers as *Navajo*, *The Bandolero*, *Under the Old Apple Tree*, *Down at the Old Bull and Bush* or *John John Keep Y' Troosers On* was as exceptional as celebrated opera stars. A record was a product to be sold and sales methods included the promotion of the performer. The rise of Peter Dawson and his ensemble colleagues to national icons is a blatant example of the power of advertising.

The interesting feature of those early years was that one man could be employed to sing everything. He could change his name but not his voice. It is difficult to believe that the same voice suited every style but the pattern does repeat itself. Examples are legion. If Peter Dawson had had any qualms about the repertoire, the advice of the Noble family, his easy-going nature and the need to earn an income had taken precedence. It is surprising how quickly 'Peter Dawson' became a known name. Although it might have been prudent for the reviewing magazine to be positive about recording artists for fear of offending the advertisers, the consistency of very good to excellent reviews for Peter Dawson recordings is a sure sign of his innate empathy with the medium. As only a voice was heard, it must have been a voice which very pleasing to listeners and easy to record.

The pattern continued in 1907: 'perhaps Peter Dawson's busiest year as a recording artist', writes Walsh. For Edison Bell, Hector Grant 'the jovial basso' appeared in the January review bringing in *A Gude New Year* and in February Peter Dawson appeared singing *Glorious Devon*, which remained for ever in his repertoire; but he does not appear for Edison Bell again until December with an 'American ballad sensation'. Perhaps the Gramophone Company was demanding his allegiance.

'Peter Dawson, the well-known bass singer' was heard on the unfortunate *British Sonogram's* double-faced *Sovereign* discs⁸² singing *Eileen Alannah* and Longfellow's *I stood on the bridge*; on *Sterling* cylinders singing *Bonnie Jean*; for Edison, as Hector Grant, *The Tobacconist's Dummy*, reviewed in February, and in December as Peter Dawson *The Singer was Irish*, on a different label this time, and to catch the Christmas market, *That's Why I'm Santa Claus* plus a duet with Walter Hyde, *Sweet Christmas bells*. - very opportune!

There are quite a handful of recordings noted as Peter Dawson on *General*, which was the White Cylinder label: in May, *Where The North Road Leaves The Minster City*, and *Excelsior*, with Walter Hyde,⁸³ and later in the year *Where the Ebb-tide Flows*, *The Same Old Church*, *The Regimental Pet*, and *Calvary*, which he had already recorded for Gramophone. But he also recorded as Hector Grant and Will Danby. Danby connects to the Noble family for he appeared in the April review with Yolande Noble in a comic confrontation: a young couple have their *First Quarrel*, when a husband comes home late after a night out. The same sketch appeared in 1908 for

⁸² which were often made from defunct *Nicole* matrices

⁸³ recorded in 1905 for Edison Bell with Virgo

Edison Bell, except Yolande then used the name 'Miss Dora Whittaker'.⁸⁴ As he was contracted to the Gramophone Company the bulk of the numbers reviewed in 1907 are either Zonophone or G&T. Hector Grant can now be claimed as a Zonophone artist: in the January review two Harry Lauder numbers, in March 'four rollicking records' which include *John, John*, in May four 'never done anything better' records including *I wish I had someone to love me*, 'a master-piece' of its kind. In July he recorded his own *Sandy, You're a Dandy* and in October (Z 693), in preparation for the Christmas market, a sketch, *Christmas Eve in an Australian Miners' Camp*, which Walsh calls *Christmas Eve in the Barrucks*. It is easy to imagine the light-hearted mood in the recording studio: the stock quartet, most of them using false names, plus Arthur Gilbert talking, singing, cheering loudly, a violin squeaking away, and finally a hearty toast to the King and Queen followed by a rousing (carousing) *National Anthem*.

The December recording, *The wreck of the troopship* (Z 564), of which Peter Dawson has a tale to tell, was in similar exuberant vein. Try to imagine the crowd in the studio: singers and orchestra; singing, talking, bugles blowing and, importantly, sound effects, particularly lightning and thunder. The sound of thunder is made by shaking a large, heavy, flexible sheet of metal. In his enthusiasm to sink the ship the agitator of the sheet lost control of it, hitting Peter Dawson on the head and knocking him out. "It wrecked me," said Peter, describing the event, "but it saved the troopship."⁸⁵

Peter Dawson was also well to the fore under his own name. In the February review he is backed by a lusty men's chorus - his turn as soloist - in a recording of *Little Brown Jug*, 'that greatest of all drinking songs', 'popular since its composition in 1869'; and similarly another song, which every Scout has sung around the camp-fire, *Oh me darling Clementine*. In contrast, in March 'the hard-working young man from the Antipodes' joins Pike in the hymn, *Lead Kindly Light*, 'in splendid style, the effect heightened by organ accompaniment'. At the opposite end of the market in April, no sooner recorded than sold, the maudlin cowboy songs: *The place where the old horse died*, and *Wrap me up in my old stable jacket*.

At Dawson's 25th Anniversary dinner an early recording was played on an 1898 Berliner/Johnson phonograph:⁸⁶

Its battered, but highly polished horn projected the wheezy, thin tone into the room. "Many brave hearts are asleep in the deep, so beware, beware!" sang the voice, wobbling with the turntable.

The song referred to was *Asleep in the Deep*, which he recorded 'when he commenced with HMV in 1905'. The popularity of this lugubrious bass song depended in part on its final descending low notes, which transport the listener into eerie, watery, subterranean depths. As Fred Gaisberg also recalls it as a 1905 recording,⁸⁷ together with *'Tis I* and *The Bedouin Love*

⁸⁴Yolande also appears in her own right, notably in 1912 for the National Gramophone Company, at the time brother Tom is sound engineer.

⁸⁵Dawson, 1933, in *The Gramophone*, republished 1973 in *The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1923-73, had appeared in EMI, 1926, 02.00, *The Voice*.

⁸⁶EMI, 1931, 04.00, *The Voice*

⁸⁷EMI, *The Voice*, 1948, 01.00

Song, it does not confirm the date but indicates that power of recall can be rather generalised, because Peter Dawson first recorded *Asleep in the deep* in December 1907 for Zonophone as **George Welsh**, bass.

Fortunately Peter Dawson's serious repertoire was not neglected. In the middle of the year, as part of the ensemble, he was allocated the baritone solos in the recording of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, where his pronounced affinity for this style came to the fore. In the same period Gaisberg's nest of singers swapped around as soloists or ensemble when 'Sullivan's Operatic Party' continued its activities with recordings of *Yeomen of the Guard* and *Gondoliers* on 8th and 18th February.

The temperamental recording technique of sticking the head in and out of a horn to control volume while singing the same song over and over again without making mistakes must have required a singer with self-confidence and a reliable vocal technique; one who could enjoy what he was doing, and not be easily irritated. Peter Dawson had the ideal qualifications: he was young, needed an income, and was not choosy about what he sang or for whom he sang. No surprise that by the end of the year he was being touted as *Popular record makers No. 11: Mr Peter Dawson*.⁸⁸ Even these listings for the first few years of his career project a feeling of youthful exuberance coupled with a sense of opportunism and lack of direction: they focus on Peter Dawson in particular, but he personifies the state of the industry at that time.

In various sources there are conflicting reports of Peter Dawson's rates of pay for recording. To Walsh it appears that Peter Dawson signed exclusively for a company which offered one-third of what Edison would pay him. Some accounts maintain that Peter Dawson was given a choice between a flat rate & a shilling royalty on each disc. As the cheapest disc - which carried the bulk of his early recordings - sold for 2/6, this is obviously incorrect, and it was many years before Peter Dawson had royalty contracts. The source of the idea was that Edison cylinders were actually reduced to one shilling. Competing companies, which tried to sell at a lower rate, lost their market share of an ever-diminishing cylinder market and went bankrupt. Even Edison, which introduced the successful *Amberol* cylinder in 1908, did not survive beyond 1914 in England.

So by good-luck or more likely on the advice of his brother-in-law, who understood the market trend, Peter Dawson aligned himself with The Gramophone Company, so the concentration of G&T or Zonophone recordings has its contractual basis. Walsh reports⁸⁹ that Peter Dawson had a retaining fee of £25 and earned £72 on the 1906 contract, and in 1909 earned one guinea per solo, 10/6 for each duet or quartet. The first registered agreement between the parties which is available is the 1907 contract⁹⁰ for three years, the forerunner of all future exclusive contracts.

⁸⁸EMI, 1907, 11.00, *The Sound Waves and Talking Machine Record*.

⁸⁹Walsh, 1961, February: 'The Gaisbergs persuaded Peter Dawson to sign an exclusive contract minimum £25 though he earned £72 that year. It seems incredible that the young singer would accept a contract with such a paltry guarantee ... after all he made £75 in five days with *John John*.'

⁹⁰EMI, 1907, 04.25

Changes during the negotiation stage, which involved brother-in-law Tom, indicate that the 1906 base is probably correct, but the 1909 figure incorrect. In 1907 the agreed retaining fee began as typed £50, became a handwritten £80 and finally a handwritten £100 each year. Similarly the recording fees: for solo singing one guinea becomes two, and 'each Quartette' is also doubled from 10/6 to one guinea; and an overall guarantee of 'a minimum of £100.0.0 work each year'; that is, Peter Dawson was guaranteed at least £200 per year, about half a reasonable living wage, until 1910.⁹¹

Note that at this stage the contract is expressly solo or 'quartette or part-songs', but the listings show that this also included singing in 'the chorus', the chorus being those members of the ensemble not currently singing more exposed lines, as in the G & S recordings. At that rather primitive stage of development each young performer was a sort of musical Man (or Girl) Friday.

However active the listings may appear, his Gramophone Company contract only tied him down to 'at least two calls in each month upon my services', although 'no absence from London or other agreement or work will interfere' with this obligation and he was also contracted to give due notice should he intend to be away from London for more than two weeks.

There is one singularity. Although Peter Dawson never refers to *White*, Walsh has noted that, at the same time as his exclusive contract to the Gramophone Company, White cylinders claimed that Peter Dawson as exclusive to them. The explanation lies in the 1907 contract. Recording for the other cylinder companies may have been moonlighting - and a reason for pseudonyms - but White actually had an understanding with the Gramophone Company. Peter Dawson had agreed to sing any songs in his repertoire and to learn other designated work exclusively for the Gramophone Company on disc⁹² but he could record for 'the "White" Cylinder Record' for 'reproduction on cylinders only'.

These claims of exclusivity are confusing. Despite the April, 1907 contract with the Gramophone Company, Peter Dawson appears under various pseudonyms in the examples collated. At the beginning of the year he appears with two ballads in the first listing by a new wax cylinder label, *Clarion*,⁹³ the label of the *Premier Manufacturing Company*.⁹⁴ At the end of the year he appears on 10" double face 'hill-and-dale discs' for *Pathé*. In November he recorded *The Volunteer Organist*, his first on Edison's premier four-minute *Blue Amberol*, which was introduced in 1908.

This ballad, one of the great sentimental favourites⁹⁵, tells of the mysterious

⁹¹Appendix 8. EMI contracts, formula & table. In order to better understand the significance of amounts quoted they have been converted into relative 1996 £ and \$A terms. £200 in 1907 = £6560, \$A16000

⁹²'for the purpose of reproduction by any Talking Machines or reproducing instrument other than your own'

⁹³Walsh, 1961, from January 1908 review, therefore probably recorded late 1907

⁹⁴Walsh, 1961: Premier stayed in business until about the time electrically recorded discs were introduced. It made both cylinders and discs until its plant was destroyed by fire in the 1920s. Probably the only company making wax cylinders after Edison discontinued them in 1912.

⁹⁵Walsh, 1961: 'old fashioned "sob" song'

appearance of a ragged old man, who has the congregation in tears as he accompanies tales of his own misfortunes. When he stops playing the old man disappears. Not surprising to read that 'the glorious, expressive voice of this eminent artist is heard in all its grandeur and dramatic force in this number' - but surprising to read that it was not reviewed until February, 1913. So there appear to have been some constraints, although judging from the number of recordings for Edison Bell, there also seems to be some collusion between the companies.

1908 is the last year Peter Dawson appeared as Hector Grant: at the beginning of the year and in October. He appears as Will Danby in *Tickle me, Timothy* and with 'Miss Dora Whittaker', i.e. Yolande, in *Waltz me, Bill and Their first quarrel* again. Under his own name he also appears with the whistler again and sings the popular *Bedouin Love Song*, claimed as one of his first for The Gramophone Company. Trying to recover ground lost to Edison, Edison Bell brought out 'an elaborate version' of *The Village Blacksmith*, which occupied two cylinders, 'in the new (gold moulded) process @ 1/- instead of 9d', and in September they even introduced discs, on which Peter Dawson sang *The Wolf*, a song which many had been expecting him to sing on cylinder.

Peter Dawson appears on Zonophone in a mixed sextet with Pike as the soloist, and a row of negro spirituals recorded in March under false names: Pike (Herbert Payne), James Baker (Stanley Kirby) and William Stewart, who is believed to be Peter Dawson. Possibly occasioned by the cylinder recording, Zonophone recorded *The Bedouin Love Song* in April.

It may have been Peter Dawson's appearance on discs by another company which caused The Gramophone Company to seek legal opinion on the interpretation of 'disc-recording'. In the opinion of the solicitor, if Peter Dawson had sung 'into any instrument so that Disc-records of his voice can be reproduced by anyone but yourselves, he will have committed a breach', but the matter was not pursued because the company believed the recording in question had been pirated.⁹⁶

At the beginning of 1909 Peter Dawson was one of thirty-five artists with contracts at the London Branch⁹⁷. As he sang at Covent Garden in January and went on tour in Australia with Amy Castles between September 1909 and February 1910, it was a rather short recording year. His name is still associated with Edison; two famous songs which appear in the 1934 Gramophone catalogue, *The Miner's Dream of Home* recorded in July and *The Bandolero* about October 1910, were originally Blue Amberols. At the Gramophone Company he recorded *I am a Friar of Orders Grey* which was also carried forward, and the patriotic *Rule Britannia*. He joined the highly regarded Eleanor Jones-Hudson (as Alvena Yarrow), in the *Don Giovanni* duet *Give me thy hand, oh fairest*, but one of his enduring favourites, *Simon the Cellarer* he recorded as James Osborne. The 'Sullivan's Operatic

⁹⁶EMI, 1908, 05.20. 'make disc-records direct without the knowledge of Dawson, he I think would have remedy against them, as it looks very much like fraud.

⁹⁷EMI, 1909, 01.26: 35 artists incl Amy Castles (expires July), Coldstreams, Harry Lauder, Patti, Maggie Teyte, Tetrazzini

Party' recordings of 1907 were publicised towards the end of 1909⁹⁸ with a photo of the group listening to a gramophone in the City Road Studio with its single recording horn in the background. The article can be dated c.1910 because on same page text headed 'Brisk Business in Zonophones' mentions that 'Zonophone has added the Trademark *His Master's Voice* to its label'.

There can be little argument that *His Master's Voice* is the most famous trademark in recorded music, so much so that it is easy to forget that it is simply a trademark. It was technically incorrect for Peter Dawson to say that he recorded for *His Master's Voice* before 1909.⁹⁹ The label is taken from a painting of that name. Originally the famous dog, *Nipper*, was painted listening to an Edison phonograph, but, as the painter, Frances Barraud, could not sell the painting, he approached Owens in 1899 to obtain a more modern machine to substitute for the phonograph. Owens provide him with the 1898 Model. Owens then purchased the painting but did not substitute it for his current trademark which was of an angel using a quill to write on a disc. In America Johnson had 'the dog' printed on paper labels in 1900 to replace etching, but the Gramophone Company did not use this trademark until 1909.

By 1910, when Peter Dawson returned to the fold and to a new contract, The Gramophone Company had developed to a position of pre-eminence in the industry.¹⁰⁰ The new factory at Hayes was established; the original factory in Hanover was taxed to capacity supplying the German market;¹⁰¹ there were other branch factories in Russia, Austria, France, Spain, and India, with Hayes only responsible for the English market and the export trade. Alfred Clark, one of the original itinerant Americans, became Managing Director and led the Company, later as Chairman of the Board, until his death in 1950.

The contract of 25th April 1910, which set the pattern for all future contracts, was renewed for three years¹⁰² and 'for so long thereafter as may be mutually agreed'. As the White Cylinder Company had become defunct, the cylinder clause was modified to allow the Artist to 'sing for one cylinder talking machine concern' providing, of course, that it did not make discs and that the Gramophone Company could acquire the cylinder recording for its own discs - which explains why the same song could appear on either an Edison Bell or Edison label and for the Gramophone Company. Curiously, although his popularity was manifest and although there was an inflation factor,¹⁰³ the rate of pay did not improve.

To be profitable to the company he would have had to turn out the equivalent of approximately fifty titles per annum. As he was contracted for

⁹⁸EMI, c.1910. For list of singers see Appendix 8.2

⁹⁹ Moore, J., 1977, 76, but the story from a number of sources. Dawson claims that he later met the artist painting replicas for display by agents.

¹⁰⁰Moore, J., 1977, 131 among others

¹⁰¹European branches became independent, Hannover becoming *Deutsche Grammophon*.

¹⁰²EMI, 1910, 04.25: contract 25.4.10 - 24.4.13

¹⁰³1907 in \$A 1996 = \$16000 would deflate to 1910 = \$14200

two calls per month, it meant that the practical Company believed it could record them in a little more than twenty calls.¹⁰⁴ This means that, although recording was a productive part of Peter Dawson's life, it left him plenty of time for other activities - including the musical equivalent of bootlegging.

In the December 1910 issue of *Talking Machine News* Peter Dawson's photo appeared on the front cover and on page 9: 'Peter Dawson is now studying to sing grand opera under Professor Kantorez. He is undoubtedly one of the most prolific record artists living'; and in a *Talking Machine News* competition to find Britain's most popular recording artist, Pike was first, Peter Dawson second and Harry Lauder third.¹⁰⁵

Walsh, who observed that Peter Dawson's name appears with both the Gramophone Company and Edison, is puzzled by a July statement that Peter Dawson and Pike are exclusive to Zonophone, and, from a long interview with Peter Dawson, gains the impression that he was exclusive to both Gramophone and Edison. Certainly from 1911 - 1914 Peter Dawson 'added steadily to his Gramophone Company, Zonophone and Edison lists' and 'made cylinders for Edison and other companies as long as they existed'.

The observations are correct but not puzzling: early in 1911 the Gramophone Company felt constrained to review not only Peter Dawson's contract but Pike's too. On 20th January: 're **Pike & Dawson** it is essential that we should obtain exclusive rights of all kinds from them', and on 23rd February: 'the Executive have agreed this day to enlarging our guarantees, so as to make their services exclusive for our Company only', which gave rise to a new three-year contract, with an increase in the guarantee to £200.¹⁰⁶ The disc/cylinder clause remained the same, so, as Edison was now the only surviving company, he could record 'exclusively' for its cylinders.

As a tribute to the new King, George V, he recorded *God Save the King* and *Hail King George* with the National Military Band in March; in September he recorded the very difficult Mendelssohn bass song, *I am a Roamer*, a song with athletic leaps, which featured in many concert programmes; about the same time he recorded his first *Toreador Song*. These songs, like many which can be found in the HMV catalogue, were first recorded for cylinders.

The Zonophone list contains some famous 'Peter Dawson' numbers for the first time: Edward German's lively *Rolling down to Rio*, and the double-sided *Young Tom o' Devon* and *Glorious Devon*, for which he had 'contrived to transport himself from Australia'. Ephemeral music was not neglected: he sang *Little Annie Roonie is my sweetheart* as a solo among similar songs by 'The Zonophone Concert Party'.

Peter Dawson and his advisers must have realised that the new contract understated his value and made successful representation to the Company because in the second half of 1912 the current contract was improved dramatically - to a guaranteed total of £850¹⁰⁷. The previous £2.2.0/£1.1.0 rates became:

¹⁰⁴in a theatre an orchestra or a recording studio 'a call' is one session, not one day.

¹⁰⁵In May 1911 another competition: 1st Harry Lauder, 2nd Billy Williams (*John, John*), 3rd PD 3rd, Pike to 5th.

¹⁰⁶EMI, 1911, 01.20; EMI, 1911, 02.23; EMI, 1911, 04.25 - total £300 1996\$A = c.\$20000

¹⁰⁷in 1996 terms = c\$A40000

(a)	For each song being a solo	£5.5.0
(b)	" " duet	£4.4.0
(c)	" " song being a quartette or other part song	£3.3.0

If he only sang solos at 5 guineas that would be 72 records minimum over the eighteen months or 48 per annum. As he did participate in part songs the total number recorded would need to be more to recoup the outlay.

Some conception of his activities may be gained from *Peter Dawson Account April 1910 to October 1912*,¹⁰⁸ still mostly at the old rates. During the three and a half years the total payments on this account were £905.11.0. Apart from the retaining fees of some £400+ the earnings are explained largely by:

12 rehearsals	@	£1.1.0	12.12.0
199 ensembles	@	£1.1.0	208.19.0
18 ensembles	@	£3.3.0	56.14.0
8 specials	@	£3.3.0	21.04.0
70 solos	@	£2.2.0	147.00.0
7 solos	@	£5.5.0:	<u>36.15.0</u>
			£487.04.0

This analysis shows some 314 payments over three and a half years, i.e. the best part of 100 calls a year, of which only roughly one third were for solo numbers, two thirds for some sort of ensemble.

Some of the many and varied recordings in 1912 and 1913 before his tour to Australasia have become classics. Edison could finally issue *The Volunteer Organist* and *The Wolf* but the bulk of the material was now coming from Zonophone. In January he recorded Handel's pleasant *Droop not young lover*, in August Willeby's *Mandalay*, one of several versions of Kipling's poem. He and Pike continued their successful partnership - 'no more perfect records of male voice duets' - with *Tenor & Baritone* and *Albion, on thy fertile plains*, amid a host of Peter Dawson ballads including *The Admiral's Yarn*, *The Blue Dragoons*, *The Village Blacksmith*, *Dinder Courtship*, *Up from Somerset*, and the American import, *Little grey home in the West*. But of all his songs, the song Peter Dawson claims sold the most was Katie Moss's 1911 *The Floral Dance*, which appeared 'with a catchy accompaniment and sung in rollicking style' as a single faced HMV edition in 1912, and again on Zonophone in 1913.

After the success of the Amy Castle tour in 1909 Peter Dawson plucked up the courage to go it alone in 1913 with his own team, including Nan. When he returned he signed a new contract for two years, 8.4.14 - 7.4.16.¹⁰⁹ The overall increase per annum was £50, which covered inflation. His repertoire centred more on 'serious' music, among then Frederick Cowen's 1892 setting of Longfellow's *Onaway awake beloved* and Schumann's ballad-style lied, *The Two Grenadiers* - in English.

¹⁰⁸EMI, 1912, 04.25 chosen as an example of Gramophone Co. method of keeping accounts.

¹⁰⁹EMI, 1914, 04.08

Cylinders no longer appeared so the subterfuge of pseudonyms was no longer necessary. Pseudonyms were clearly common practice:¹¹⁰

there were two reasons for singers to record under various names: one was that they had a contract with a certain company, and wanted to make some money with a rival firm, which they could do in another identity. Curiously there are only a few proven instances of this. The other reason was that certain staff artists of Victor Columbia and other big companies made such a lot of records that they were issued under various names just to make the catalogue look a bit more varied. In isolated cases artists appeared under their own name in their regular repertoire while choosing a pseudonym when recording popular music.

Peter Dawson had quite a collection: Leonard Dawson, Hector Grant, Will Danby, William Stewart, George Welsh have been mentioned and for *Simon the Cellarer* and *The Deathless Army*¹¹¹ he had used James Osborne.¹¹² Other sources cite Arthur Walpole and Walter Wentworth,¹¹³ and in Walsh's opinion Jonny Wakefield and Arthur Gilbert were also Peter Dawson, although Gilbert and Grant are heard together on one recording. Why Peter Dawson chose these particular names remains a conundrum.

It seems certain that some incognitos were used to avoid breaking contractual obligations, Leonard was simply cosmetic, Hector Grant had to be Scottish to cover piracy, Will Danby allowed him free reign as a comedian, some of the others for group work or the lighter muse, so that he could reserved his own name predominantly for literature which was suitable for the concert platform.

The musical quality of many songs and the reviews suggest superb records, but quality was all relative to the technical possibilities of the period. The size of the cheapest records limited playing time to about three minutes, wider, more expensive records extended to four:

Only two sizes of records were issued under the wax process: the twelve inch running normally for four and a quarter minutes and the ten inch lasting three minutes ten seconds¹¹⁴

so it was necessary to emasculate many fine works to fit the recording time: opera and oratorio arias suffered the most along with classical art songs; introductions, play-outs, strophes and interludes were deleted or truncated. Composers of popular songs took recording time into account and created the template for the three-minute song.¹¹⁵ This practice continued even after the introduction of electrical recording. Examples of doctoring may be found in Peter Dawson repertoire. This example from 1929 highlights the

¹¹⁰*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 187, 'Pseudonyms and Anonyms'

¹¹¹Fassnidge, 1957, 01.21: '...taken back to my teens when I used to buy your recordings weekly - *Deathless Army*, Trooper Johnny Ludlow'

¹¹²Vose, 1987, 57

¹¹³Brisbane (ed), 1991

¹¹⁴Moore, G., 1962, 59-60

¹¹⁵detail three minute song and other repertoire in Chapter 6 - Analysis

practice:¹¹⁶

sent to Peter Dawson at 10 Evelyn Grove Ealing Common W5:
'... a copy of the song THE DESERT which you are recording at the Small Queen's Hall next week (beginning April). You will see that we have made various "cuts" in this to make it a three minute record.'

The growth of the 'gramophone' had brought changes. When the company began to manufacture its own equipment instead of importing it from USA, it decided to build a factory well out in the country, in Hayes, Middlesex. Nellie Melba laid the cornerstone in 1907, although the acoustic recording studios did not move there until after they were opened by Chaliapin in 1913.¹¹⁷ During this period Peter Dawson and his wife had lived on the opposite side of London, close to Nan's family, but after the War they moved to Ealing, the suburb closest to Hayes.¹¹⁸

Imbued by optimism after the success of the 1913 Australasian tour, Peter Dawson and Nan set out again in 1914. Although they could not know it, their departure marked the end of the 'First Period', the period of ten years from his introduction to the talking machine industry to becoming one of the outstanding artists in that medium. During the War years there is a lack of continuity, a scrambly effect, as if an adjustment were needed between the practical reality of bargaining for a living and the exaggerated expectations caused by the excesses of publicity.

Peter Dawson was stranded in Australia from late 1914 and could not return to London until late 1916. His absence had prejudiced his contract. He had been paid his retainer and advances but had not recorded sufficient numbers to satisfy his liability. He owed the Company £448.12. 0, and 'was due to arrive ... in a broke condition'¹¹⁹ so there was some doubt that he should be re-engaged. In fact, the next contract was in 1919, and yet he writes that he recorded '40 songs in six weeks, from October 13 to November 23'.¹²⁰ In order to prove to his critics who did not believe that he 'had recorded 3500 different titles', he noted the songs in this period as he sang them. Forty songs, for every taste, are listed in his book. Although his EMI file holds no substantiating documentation, there must have been some arrangement between himself and the Company, possibly to work out the old contract, because on 22nd November he recorded one of his most famous songs, the lugubrious *Cobbler's Song*, from the Norton musical, *Chu Chin Chow*. Peter Dawson claims that the Company was so anxious to get the hit onto the market that he was handed this song as he walked into the studio, sight-read it, and had recorded it within ten minutes.¹²¹

In January and February 1917 he recorded some serious classics, in June the

¹¹⁶EMI, 1929, 03.26

¹¹⁷photos Moore, G., 1962, 104-105

¹¹⁸Even today the Underground stops at Ealing Common and, it is then a twenty minute bus ride along a crowded suburban thoroughfare to the factory. In those days Hayes must have been well out in the country.

¹¹⁹1996 = c.\$A25000; EMI, 1916, 09.25

¹²⁰Dawson, 1951, 140, quoted in Walsh, 1962

¹²¹discussed further - Chapter 6

patriotic *Australia*.¹²² The expansion of popular music of American origin is apparent from the number of musicals he was induced to record. In March he recorded the perennially successful *A Bachelor Gay am I* from *Maid of the Mountains* and duets from other musicals with Pike. For the substance of the '40 songs' he changed his name again, this time to Will Strong. As the songs appeared in 1918 they give the impression of continuity; but they were recorded in late 1916 early 1917. In October Will Strong sang the light-hearted, pro-Allied forces, *The Tanks that broke the ranks*, but the bulk of them, such as *Where the black-eyed Susans grow* and *Down where the Swanee River flows*, were in mock-negro spiritual/musical style, which induced one critic to write:

Will Strong ... a singer whose name has appeared a good deal of late on Zonophone, who is worthy of more than a passing notice, although he may not sing the very highest class of song is the happy possessor of a full, rich, and powerful baritone

and another:

A strong baritone with a voice singularly in consonance with that of another 'strong baritone' recently departed these shores

By the time the reviews were available Peter Dawson had returned to Australia to become involved in the War Effort and finally to join the Army.

If the period to 1914 was the First Period, 1919-1925 was the Second, the period of maturity and the end of acoustic recording. By 1919 Peter Dawson and his wife were back in London again, permanently. The Gramophone Company now dominated the market, the only serious rival being Columbia Records. The world wanted to celebrate the end of war so entertainment came into its own, with Peter Dawson personifying the best of the past which the public was enthusiastic to recapture.

Back in London and back in favour Peter Dawson was offered a contract which improved on all previous contracts:

retaining fee £300;
(a) solo £10; (b) duet £5; (c) trio, quartette or other part song £4;
in the event of the payment hereunder exclusive of the retaining fee not amounting to £900 ...

a guaranteed total of £1200.¹²³ The contract was offered initially for one year only, 1.12.19 - 30.11.20,¹²⁴ suggesting a certain caution on the part of the Company, which was not reflected in the brash publicity.

In 1917 the Gramophone Company started its own in-house magazine, *The Voice*, now a favourite resource for much of the information about the Company. However, the information is specifically biased towards extolling

¹²²not to be confused with his own 1941 composition with that title

¹²³1996 = \$A60000

¹²⁴EMI, 1919, 12,01

the successes of the Company operations, so it is only relatively reliable as documentary evidence. As Peter Dawson was not 'on the books' until the end of 1919, he is not promoted until Volume 4, No. 3, March 1920, where he is featured in news *From the Recording Theatre*. Text is printed around a small serious photo of the thirty-seven year old, still with a full head of hair and with the wing collar which he always favoured. After his 'long absence in Australia' he was making frequent visits to the recording studio. 'His voice is better than ever. Perhaps the tropical sunshine may have helped.' Although he had entered into a contract with the Gramophone to sing on any of their labels, the latest catch-phrase was that he had entered into a new and exclusive contract with "His Master's Voice". In the article Peter Dawson also joined in the spiel:

Mr. Dawson referred to the great help he had always received from the gramophone. He said, "I used to take home records of the world's most famous singers and study the way they rendered each song. The reproductions were so life-like that one could even follow the artists' methods of breathing; indeed I owe more to the gramophone than I can possibly express."¹²⁵

The November issue continued the pattern: 'There is no artist whose voice is more suitable for recording, and the numbers made by him are as popular as any in our catalogue'. Numbers included arias in English, with which his name was already associated: Figaro's Act 1 aria from *The Marriage of Figaro* *Now your days of philandering are over*;¹²⁶ the *Toreador's Song* from *Carmen*, with its awkward, dated beginning: "Sirs! A toast"; *Room for the Factotum* from *The Barber of Seville*, difficult enough in Italian, a tongue-twister in English, though he actually considered it 'the easiest to sing, it comes tripping off the tongue';¹²⁷ and that model of truncation, *The Prologue* from *Pagliacci*, beginning 'A word allow me, sweet ladies and gentlemen', still the favoured English version, although it stems from Weatherley in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁸

From the beginning of 1921, just before the tour to India, comes a favourite: Percy French's moving, *The Mountains o' Mourne*, tailor-made for Peter Dawson's unique style. But he could apply himself to anything: That American music was not neglected indicates the influence of musicals and the new cinema on popular English entertainment for the Gramophone Company collected many of the artists from the team of the early days to record numbers like *Francesco del Fuego* and *Here's to those we love* from *A Southern Maid*, in which Peter Dawson has his turn as soloist with his equally famous colleagues, Nellie Walker, Bessie Jones, Ernest Pike and Edward Halland, as chorus. In the same period he and Pike revert to their scallywag characters with *Let the rest of the world go by* and *Take your girlie*

¹²⁵ c/f newspaper, 1935, 05.20: '*Things I Hate* No.1. To hear my own gramophone records played'

¹²⁶most English speaking singers used this old-fashioned version until the Dent translation became popular after World War 2.

¹²⁷Dawson, 1951, 134

¹²⁸'truncation' explained Chapter 6. (author): this collection a persuasive argument for opera in the original language

to the movies (*If you can't make love at home*) - as Courtland & Strong. During the 1919 contract, which had been extended to the end of January 1921, the Company had advanced Peter Dawson an extra £200. On 1st February 1921, before leaving on tour, he signed a letter of agreement¹²⁹ to enter into a contract for one year extendable to three years, on his return. The proposed nett sum was the same, £1200, but he had to repay the £200 by accepting £1000 the first year. This agreement resulted in the contracts 9.9.21 - 8.9.24. The static sum meant a gradual reduction in real terms, which may have caused some back and forth in the final stages of negotiation, because the first contract, from 9th September, 1921, was not signed until 17th October.

One of the most popular photos of Peter Dawson¹³⁰ shows him in shirt-sleeves surrounded by instrumentalists 'recording at the Gramophone Company in 1920'. Most of Peter Dawson's recordings are backed by what is euphemistically referred to as an 'orchestra'. The space at the City Road and later, as in this photo, at Hayes, allowed only a small combination of instruments, even though 'orchestral' recordings had been made as early as 1909. As recordable sounds under the acoustic system only ranged from E to c''' instruments were selected which could be recorded satisfactorily on the wax process by way of that single horn. In the photo there are eleven instruments; recognisable are three cornets, one cello, one clarinet, and there would have been a tuba, a trombone and tympani. It was an odd combination, like an enhanced brass band, the cornets doing the work of the violins. In Gaisberg's words¹³¹:

The inadequacy of the accompaniments to the lovely vocal records made in the Acoustic Age was their great weakness. There was no pretence of using the composer's score; we had to arrange it for wind instruments ... and all nuances were omitted

So how reliable is Peter Dawson's story¹³² of the trombonist, who, forced to move his slide between the violin and cello in the notoriously cramped space, caught the ear of the violinist and toppled him over onto a couple of others in the band?

The conditions for a large orchestra are described by Sir Adrian Boult,¹³³ who was assigned to the first ballet recordings in 1919. The studio was so small it 'would hardly have held a full-size billiard table' but the recording horn was enormous, 'three or four times the size of the one we know from the HMV picture'. Sir Adrian sat 'high up on the wall near the great horn'; the concert master, surrounded by a few strings, had 'his fiddle nearly inside the mouth of the horn'. The other instruments were at varying distances; the double-bass was replaced by a tuba and the French horns looked into a mirror so that their horns faced the recording horn.

¹²⁹Dawson, 1921, 02.01 held by EMI

¹³⁰among others: Gelatt, 1977, 163; Dawson, 1952, 96; Burgis 1982, and cover; original and blow-up of a section held by EMI archives.

¹³¹Moore, J., 1977, 173-74

¹³²Dawson, 1933, 315: 'Thirty Years of Record Making' in *The Gramophone*

¹³³Boult, 'Making the Records', in *The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 15 - paraphrased

The recording horn 'was the centre of our world, immovable'. In the machine-chamber on the other side, wrote Sir Adrian, was Arthur Clark, who was in charge at that time. He handled huge discs of heated wax which looked 3" or 4" thick. The indentations could not be touched until they had hardened so the master was placed in a special container the moment it was finished and the performance was perpetuated warts and all.

To make contact with the artists there was a tiny window next to the horn through which Arthur Clark could poke his head to give instructions. 'The gala days in the recording studio were those on which Chaliapine, De Pachmann and Peter Dawson recorded', writes a London newspaper. 'Peter Dawson ... looked upon recording as a relaxation and a holiday'.¹³⁴ The mood in the studio can be imagined. While the technical personnel were busy with their preparations the assembled musicians would be waiting restlessly:

dear old Peter would keep everyone quite helpless with laughter till "the cake was on the table". Up to that moment he would play the fool outrageously, and sing every sort of parody, rude or otherwise; then Arthur Clark, the head recorder, would stick his head through the little window and plead with him to be sane.¹³⁵

Gerald Moore describes the recording studio in 1922, when he made his first recording with Peter Dawson, who had introduced the young Canadian to the Gramophone Company.¹³⁶ The studio was built 'in the uttermost interior of the building, completely shut off from daylight and outside noise'. It was wooden, bare and over-acoustic. The pianoforte was harsh and metallic, 'had the brazen splendour of a brass spittoon' and could only make any impression if it was belted loudly. 'A huge horn or trumpet protruded into the room and tapered away into the wall'. When Peter Dawson was recording he would naturally stand in front of the horn, 'Nay, more than this he would have his head halfway down the trumpet' but the piano was moved around until some sort of balance was achieved, so 'his buttocks were all I could see of him'.¹³⁷

These conditions have been described by participants with a sense of loss. Solving the problems of the medium and coping with the ensuing irritations and the reactions of their varying temperaments developed a form of comradeship; 'the Hayes days were enjoyable, there was a happy-go-lucky feeling about it and a session usually ended up with mutual congratulations and back-slapping'.¹³⁸

¹³⁴London newspaper, 1928, 09.11, *Recording Room Secrets*

¹³⁵Booth & Ziegler, 1951, *Duet*, 52-53, 86-87

¹³⁶Moore, G., 1962, 59-60. In his book Moore describes his first recording, with a violinist: my first record for HMV [was in 1921] with Renée Chemet, the French violinist', but later both he and Peter Dawson claimed that his first recording was with Dawson. Moore, 1962: 'With Peter Dawson, the baritone, whom I next accompanied' but London newspaper, 1953, 10.18, *Gerald Moore: The first gramophone records* (the singer was Peter Dawson) appeared in the early twenties' and Moore, hw., c.1961 to PDAS: 'It was Peter Dawson with whom I made my first records'

¹³⁷He could never hear Peter Dawson properly 'and my difficulties under these conditions can be imagined since his sounds were not emanating from the end of him nearest me.'

¹³⁸Moore, G., 1962

Walsh aptly considers Peter Dawson a 'sort of handy-man' in the years to 1925. It appears that anything could sell if his name were attached to it, which applied not only to records but advertisements from cigarettes to *Horlicks*. The two files of Gramophone Company records sheet from 1922-25 indicate that he continued to sing duets and ensembles as well as a variety of solo numbers. The range was as catholic as ever ranging from opera to nonsense: many still remembered, many in the sin-bin. He continued to record arias in English: in July *Tempest of the Heart* (*Il Trovatore*) and two unusual Sullivan numbers, *Thou art passing hence*, a sentimental song composed before Sullivan's association with Gilbert, and *Woo thou thy snowflake* from his quickly forgotten (1891) *Ivanhoe*, in which 'the snowflake', Rowena, daughter of the Saxon thane Cedric, is rejected by Sir Brian the Templar in favour of the more opulent Jewess, Rebecca, whom he resolves to "woo as the lion woos" ¹³⁹.

Two beautiful songs which he fixed firmly in the baritone repertoire were Tchaikowsky's *Don Juan's Serenade*, and more particularly, *To the Forest*, with its long cantilena and gentle vocal postlude after the dramatic climax. A song to be admired in the right hands.

In October, more in the expected style, the watery bass song, *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep* and the rousing *Larboard Watch* in counterpoint with tenor, Sydney Cotham. At the same time a change of pace to Jerome Kern's *Dancing Girl* (*A Cabaret Girl*) with Ennis Parkes, the Wintergarden Theatre Orchestra,¹⁴⁰ and a 'chorus' of Bessie Jones and Walter Glynn.

But there was more handy-man work to do: for Zonophone the every popular waltz, *Peggy O'Neill*, was recorded for the first time along with the zippy, shimmying, *Sheik of Araby* this time with a new pseudonym, Robert Woodville. But he remained anonymous on three 10", that is, six sides of spoken *HMV Physical Culture Exercises* for immediate release in December. This variety continued in 1923. Noteworthy are two unusually heady English art songs: the modernist Gustav Holst's *Lovely Kind and Kindly Loving*, and Landon Ronald's equally modern *Lament of Shah Jehan*. Landon Ronald is referred to as 'composer, conductor, accompanist, coach, and 'as musical adviser until his death' in books about the Gramophone Company, because he had been associated with the Company since 1901.¹⁴¹ He was the pianist for the fraught recording with Melba in 1905 so had long been a friend of Peter Dawson and may have influenced him and the company to record quality English compositions. Walsh refers to him as 'HMV pianist and orchestra conductor for many years' but omits to recognise that he became Sir Landon as Principal of The Guildhall School of Music, one the three largest music institutions in England. Shah Jehan, the critic explains, is the potentate who built the Taj Mahal in memory of his dead wife: the *Lament of Shah Jehan* is the 'finest that Landon Ronald has yet given us. Few singers could give it with such effect as Mr Dawson'.

Another unexpected recording was William James' *Six Australian Bush Songs* reviewed in December. William James, pianist and composer, later

¹³⁹from Chislett, c.1985, cover notes for Pavilion Records, *Peter Dawson sings opera*

¹⁴⁰conducted Albert Coates also a successful composer. See Anecdotes Appendix 2.

¹⁴¹Moore, J., 1977, 77

Head of ABC Music in Sydney, had toured with Peter Dawson in Australia prior to 1914. Peter Dawson maintains that these songs were the result of a colleague questioning why he did not sing any Australian songs. Though the review may have come well after the recording date, BBC records show that Malcolm McEachern had sung *'Three Australian Bush Songs'* accompanied by the composer, W. G. James' for the first Australia Day broadcast to Australia already on 26th January that year.

William James was a reputable composer. Despite their contrasting character the flavour of the songs is very Australian; the style falls somewhere between a good English art song and a Peter Dawson ballad. Today, No.6: *The Stockrider's Song*, with its galloping rhythm and Ya-ya-yipees is a popular 'Australian' concert piece for anyone from baritones to children's choirs. From the reviews Peter Dawson appears to have recorded all six although in the later electrical version and in concerts he omitted No.3: *King Billy's Song*. He could have sung this number well but perhaps thought to avoid giving offence with the pidgin English of the protagonist. From the range, the tessitura and the style, and editing marks on his personal copy,¹⁴² the songs could have been tailored to his taste and abilities.¹⁴³ Small wonder then that the review should be laudatory.

At the other end of the scale, a novelty 12" record: the Prime Minister of New Zealand talking on one side; on the other under the title, *God defend New Zealand*, Peter Dawson and chorus in patriotic mode concluding with *God save the King*. In 1929 Peter Dawson suggested a similar recording with 'Tay Pay' O'Connor, "Father of the House of Commons", but the Company politely refused.¹⁴⁴

In May 1924, after his Wigmore Hall recital of German lieder with Gerald Moore, he recorded the demanding *Jokanaan is summoned before Salome* from Richard Strauss' *Salomé*, one of the few occasions he recorded in German. In September 'the veteran critic Herman Klein' called his *Prologue* from *Pagliacci* the best English-sung version. Although it was reviewed in 1924 it appears to be the 1920 recording. But the September recording of the beautiful duet, *The moon hath raised her lamp above* from *Lily of Killarney*, with the great Australian operatic tenor, Browning Mummery, was new.

By the end of 1923 Peter Dawson's contract was again coming up for renewal. Despite reports that he had reached his maximum income from recordings and other sources,¹⁴⁵ Peter Dawson was constrained to seek an advance of £200 in November and in April 1924 signed a complicated agreement,¹⁴⁶ giving up the 'customary proportion of fee per title when recording' in favour of proportional payment of the outstanding guarantee. In July he gave the Company the option to renew the 1921 contract for yet a fourth time, becoming the contract 9.9.24 - 8.9.25.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴²NFSA, MS5030, music folio K

¹⁴³or McEachern's.

¹⁴⁴EMI, 1929, 11,11

¹⁴⁵Hobart newspaper 1962, 01: in 1923 earned £23000 but date probably incorrect - see 1925.

¹⁴⁶EMI, 1924, 04,25

¹⁴⁷EMI, 1924, 07.08

This contract spilled over onto the beginnings of electrical recording, which was literally sneaking in. The recording company executives understood its potential for improvement but could see the danger to their catalogues of acoustical recordings if the quality improved overnight. Just before electrical discs appeared Peter Dawson recorded *The Mounties* from the musical *Rose Marie*, and with the equally respected bass, Robert Radford, two manly classical duets, Handel's *The Lord is a man of war* and Purcell's *Sound the Trumpet*,¹⁴⁸ which produced another rave review: 'the effect is electrical!' - but no pun intended.

By that time, Peter Dawson writes, his sales had rocketed to over 8,000,000.¹⁴⁹ Australian Soprano, Gladys Moncrieff, 'Our Glad', remembers him at the time:¹⁵⁰

Everyone loved Peter... The Peter Dawson I knew was a wonderful singer, and a sincere, kind person. I first met Peter in 1924 in London [when we were] guests at the Grosvenor Square home of the Australian contralto, Ada Crossley. Peter immaculate in morning suit and striped trousers, looked tall, slim, and handsome. He sang divinely.

Electrical recording reanimated the industry. This revolutionary sound recording system was produced by Western Electric in 1924 as a 'side-line to their research in telecommunication', no doubt from the use of microphones used for commercial broadcasting since 1923. Russell Hunting played a pirate copy of a recording secretly to Fred Gaisberg in London in the autumn of 1924 with the remark 'Fred, we're all out of jobs.' Fred Gaisberg was not out of a job, he remained the artistic guide for the company for another twenty-five years but his recording skills - 'there were many technical secrets in recording and matrix-making which were known only to me'¹⁵¹ - had become redundant; trained electrical sound engineers were needed; an era had come to an end.

Electrical recording was first demonstrated in America by Herbert Ridout of the Columbia Graphophone Company at the Congress while The Gramophone Company organised one 'at Caxton Hall, London, in July 1925 - a choir of 4850 voices singing *Adeste Fideles* on Columbia 9046'. But it was not revealed that the superior recording had been made by the new electrical method 'as there were still too many acoustic records in the catalogues'. In America, Victor and Columbia agreed to keep mum about electrical recording for a year, until there would be enough repertoire to publicise, so new records were introduced secretly. The new records looked like the old ones, but nevertheless reviewers soon noticed the difference and let 'the cat out of the bag'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Walsh, 1961, wrote: 'from "Puritani" '

¹⁴⁹Dawson, 1951, 128: 'By 1920 I was informed...5,000,000 by 1925 my sales had rocketed too over 8,000,000'

¹⁵⁰Australian newspaper, 1961, 10.16: *The Peter Dawson I Knew*

¹⁵¹Moore, J., 1977, 174

¹⁵²source this para Moore, J., 1977, Gelatt, 1977, and *The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 28 and 53

The new method could catch every vibration of every human voice and every instrument, it could record a whisper, some say, it could even record the atmosphere of the studio. How would the change affect the old guard, who had built up a recording technique based on loud sounds and few nuances. How would it affect Peter Dawson?

Chapter 3

part 2: recording 1925- 1955

In 1925 the electrical broadcasting microphone was introduced into gramophone studios. Because of its enormously greater range and sensitivity the microphone revolutionised gramophone recordings overnight.¹

A third period began with the introduction of electrical recording and lasted until the Second World War. The change to electrical recording had a dramatic impact. *The Gramophone* (1973)² could write 'even today there are collectors who prefer the acoustic records of those singers who spanned both eras', though few disagreed with Gerald Moore, who likened the old method to an 'approximate reproduction at best and a distortion at worst', whereas the new microphone was 'faithful, a salutary cure for smugness'. Quality made a quantum leap not only for vocalists and instrumentalists but symphony orchestras, which had recorded badly, suddenly moved into the spotlight.

How did it affect Peter Dawson? Ultimately it would contribute to the fall from grace of the ballad and its most significant proponent, but in 1925 he had still to reach the zenith of his popularity. All those associated with him during the acoustic era had admired his vocal and interpretive technique; the microphone showed his skills to even greater advantage. 'The difference in the tone quality was a revelation,' he wrote, 'so much so, that the company decided to remake most of the important records on their list',³ which included a surprising number from Peter Dawson's repertoire. Thirty years later Gale Pedrick⁴ could still remember him in shirt-sleeves, with his collar loosened, recording 'with equal skill and imperturbability, a solo from *Elijah* or a rollicking re-issue of *The Bandolero*.' The listeners also appreciated the improvement: 'his popularity among British record buyers had been great, but it became even greater'.⁵

Though Peter Dawson was an excellent worker and a generous person there is evidence to suggest that from time to time he became convinced that the Company was taking advantage of him. As such paranoia seems uncharacteristic, the impetus to ask for better recompense probably came from his brother-in-law, Tom, who appears to have acted as his manager, at least from time to time.⁶ With the change in recording technique and the high demand for his recordings 'Peter Dawson' felt that 'it was obvious I was not getting the fee commensurate with my enormous sales', so he left it to Tom Noble to negotiate a new deal, because he 'knew the gramophone

¹Moore, J., 1977, 173-75

²*Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 54

³Dawson, 1951, 129

⁴newspaper, 1955, 08.26: *A Mighty Man of Song*

⁵Walsh, 1961

⁶BBC, 1935, 12.04; BBC, 1953, 03.03; BBC, 1953, 05.04: 'we had some slight trouble with this gentleman over the previous series'

business from the inside'.⁷ Peter Dawson's contract was due for renewal on 9 September, 1925 but discussions were obviously protracted because it was not signed until 14th November.

On the afternoon of Saturday, 4 October, 1925 Peter Dawson and Nan were involved in the dreadful car accident which cut short her career.⁸ As a motor-car accident at that time was relatively uncommon and Peter Dawson was such a public figure, the circumstances were widely publicised, as was the subsequent court-case, at which he was held responsible and fined £10.⁹ Driving his 'big Renault saloon' 'from Glasgow to Newark' they had collided with 'a gay party returning from a football match' about 'seven miles from Leeds'. The dramatic moment is described variously: 'ran up the bank, struck a telegraph pole, overturned, and was wrecked', 'turned turtle and skidded 20 yards upside down'. Peter Dawson escaped unharmed but Nan was pinned underneath and very badly injured. She 'suffered several broken ribs, deep lacerations to one leg, a broken left shoulder, and her head was almost scalped. A few days later gangrene was discovered in the leg and it was only saved by a daring operation'.¹⁰

The accident to his beloved Nan was the most traumatic moment in his domestic life. Added to this came the financial worry, for hospitalisation and the slow recuperation in a nursing home were very expensive. Whether it was out of understanding for Peter Dawson's financial predicament or whether Tom Noble had persuaded the Company that he deserved a bonus for services rendered, his new contract included a bonus of £4000, ostensibly to tie him exclusively to the Company.¹¹ That the Board appreciated that the bonus was required urgently is seen from the Minute: 'We shall be extremely glad if you will make a special effort to rush this contract through':¹² the accountants paid the amount promptly, on 25 December.

The new contract, for five years to 9 September, 1930, represented a new change in policy. This was the first contract based on Royalties.¹³ Whereas it had only been possible to produce a limited quantity of discs from each master under the old system, the new method of recording allowed the Company to produce much larger quantities of discs from one master. Times had changed: from 'an order for 100 records by Peter Dawson meant a few days work' to 'to-day he can record half-a-dozen songs in a couple of sessions'.¹⁴ Financially, the artist, who has been paid for each take, was

⁷Dawson, 1951, 128

⁸from newspaper, 1926, 01.19 and Walsh, J. in *Hobbies* 1962, taken from Dawson, 1951, 96-97; newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁹newspaper, 1925, 10.06: *Singer's Wife Injured*; newspaper 1926, 01.19: *Mr. Peter Dawson fined*; £10 = c. \$A400 today

¹⁰Peter Dawson always took responsibility for the accident - and was fined, but Hughes, 1985, 05.28: Ernest Westbrook [of Durban, South Africa] wrote that Nan said she was driving and that the other car contained a load of sleepy anglers.

¹¹a clause allowed him to record for American Victor

¹²EMI, 1925, 11.11, Board minutes

¹³EMI 1925, 09.09; contract signed 11.14; PD account from 11.14

¹⁴London newspaper, 1932, 05.11

disadvantaged, so the two parties agreed on a royalty per record sold. Peter Dawson recognised that 'a royalty of 5% on retail may not sound a lot but when it runs into hundred of thousands it becomes a very respectable total'.¹⁵ What did that mean exactly? The terms are quite specific:

- (a) in the case of a single-sided record reproducing a song (solo) sung by the Artist alone ... 5% of the English selling price
- (b) song with 1 other singer 5% of $\frac{1}{2}$ (= 2.5%)
- 2 5% of $\frac{1}{3}$ (= 1.67%)
- 3 5% of $\frac{1}{4}$ (= 1.25%)
- (c) in the case of double-sided records royalties shall be calculated and paid on each side of such records at half the rates agreed for single-sided records above

that is, the same for a single or double sided record, and a proportional amount for ensembles. The cost of records at the time were:

Plum	10" (B)	3/-
	12" (C)	4/6
Black	10" (E)	4/6
	12" (D)	6/6
(Celebrity records)		
Red	10" (DA)	6/-
	12" (DB)	8/6

The bulk of Peter Dawson recordings¹⁶ were in category 'B', 10" Plum labels, @ 3/-¹⁷ so on each solo B record he earned 1.8 pence.

His earnings were protected by a minimum guarantee of £1000 per annum for the next five years; the Company would carry any ultimate loss. In theory he could earn more than the cumulative £5000; the £4000 bonus or retainer being an extra. For the Company to recoup its outlay it would need to sell 240,000 Peter Dawson solo records each year or 1,200,000 over five years. Could it?

Webster Booth, just starting his career, remembers that¹⁸:

In those days, to me, Peter *was* recording, and all it meant! I was familiar with music-shops whose shelves were full of his records on a Saturday morning and empty at night.

Gerald Moore also recalls that such was the drawing power of Peter Dawson's name that 'vendors in gramophone shops up and down the country would sell a machine by playing Peter Dawson's rendering of *The Floral Dance*',¹⁹ which had been re-recorded on 16 March 1926.

The Company also knew his value: in the February edition of *The Voice* he expressed the opinion that a new *His Master's Voice* instrument was 'what

¹⁵Dawson, 1951, 128

¹⁶indicated from the collation of records sampled

¹⁷also a few in category 'C', their number gradually increasing with the years

¹⁸Booth & Ziegler, 1951, *Duet*, 52-53, 86-87

¹⁹Moore, G., c.1961, hw.

he has been waiting for ever since he has known the gramophone';²⁰ at the end of the year he recorded for the Company behind glass in a specially constructed studio at the Ideal Home Exhibition so that the public could see him at work.²¹ Three years later, in November 1929, he was called to Witherington Studios in Soho 'so that a photograph can be taken of you, with two of our latest machines'. One was probably the latest Gramophone, the other 'the portable wireless set' - one of which he requested as a quid pro quo.²²

These Peter Dawson endorsements with 'the latest machine' appear to have been conceived annually: a 1930 company photo taken at Harrods was used for the 1931 Australasia tour; another taken in 1932, showing the middle-aged idol seated in his library reading music, next to a gramophone cabinet with a model ship on top, was also used for the 1933 tour; and in October 1934 he even made a recording promoting *HMV Model 570*, backed by a snippet of *The Floral Dance*, probably for the Radio Show at Olympia, which crops up annually.

There is no information in the files outlining specific decisions to re-make the old titles but the lengthy 1934/35 catalogue listing contains a wealth of these favourites in the new system. In January 1926, he recorded one of the songs now indelibly associated with his name, *When the Sergeant Major's on Parade*, on a 12" C, coupled with a new version of the oft-revived *The Boys of the Old Brigade* in comparable parade-ground marching rhythm.

Walsh found yet another version of *The Prologue* from *Pagliacci*, 'one of the most noteworthy of [his] early electric recordings', a 12" version requiring both sides of a record. The critics waxed lyrical too about the remake of *The Vagabond*: 'Our famous bass-baritone Peter Dawson is in fine form, but when is that incomparable singer out of form?'²³

In June 1927 Walsh finds another 'rave review', for Tchaikowsky's *Don Juan* and Schubert's *Erl King*, 'perhaps the best dramatic ballad ever written ... sung in a manner which thrills'. He does not mention the pianist who played the horrendous accompaniment, but it was Gerald Moore, whose name often appeared with Peter Dawson in this period. In October Moore accompanied the re-make of the five above-mentioned *Australian Bush Songs* of William James; in September the following year Bantock's *Captain Harry Morgan*, d'Hardelot's *The Curtain Falls* - perceived as 'a rather sombre affair' - with the far less meaty *Hinton, Dinton and Mere*, 'a cheery ballad of the "rollicking baritone" type'²⁴ on the other side.

In the same month he recorded *Ol' Man River*, from *Show Boat*, the song now usually associated with Paul Robeson, with an orchestra in the Small Queen's Hall. A number of solid old favourites such as *The Smuggler's Song*, *A Jovial Monk am I*, *The Drum Major*, *Boots* and the dramatic, quasi

²⁰EMI, 1926, 02.00, *The Voice*

²¹Dawson, 1951, 33, photograph

²²EMI, 1929, 11.29: 'I shall expect in all fairness to be given one. I travel greatly by motor car throughout the country & I should never be without it.'

²³Walsh, 1961

²⁴newspaper, 1929, 03.23: *Topicality in Records* mentions Gracie Fields and carries a contemporary photo of Peter Dawson

negro-spiritual, *My Journey's End*, date from 1929.

He was not obliged to accept every suggestion²⁵ but he did sing on two complete Gilbert and Sullivan recordings in a series which 'Carte & Sullivan' had been supervising since 1925.²⁶

Board minute approval: Sullivan & Carte, Gilbert & Sullivan Opera, 'payment of £5.5.0 each to Sullivan & Carte for supervising each rehearsal and recording performance, plus reasonable out-of-pocket expenses'

The Yeomen of the Guard was recorded at the end of 1928, *The Pirates of Penzance* in February, 1929. The recordings attracted an extra £100 each.²⁷ Peter Dawson sang 'The Pirate King'. In the successful recording he can be heard as soloist, in duets, trios and in the grand finales.

Again Sullivan and Carte supervised, again the more spacious Small Queen's Hall was needed, again Malcolm Sargent conducted from Sullivan's original score. Again many famous singers were gathered for the occasion: old colleagues like Derek Oldham, Leo Sheffield, George Baker, Dorothy Gill, Elsie Griffin plus a full chorus. In the new system it was possible for the strings to have a microphone to themselves, another for the wind, brass and percussion, a third for the soloists - 'penned off in the central space' with the chorus, which had a fourth. Dr Malcolm Sargent 'controlled his scattered forces with the most admirable spirit and patience' from a high rostrum.²⁸

Peter Dawson²⁹ did not describe the session as 'controlled with admirable spirit and patience'. As far as he was concerned the sessions were long and fussy; Sargent wanted the singers to sing full voice all the time, which can be very tiring, especially with many interruptions. The experienced Dawson saved his voice on occasion, for which he was singled out publicly by Sargent, who felt he did not know his part. Added to that was the irritating presence of the D'Oyly Carte agents, who had the job of reporting any mistakes. Not the most auspicious circumstances for proud professionals!

The pattern continued favourably until the end of 1929, when the Depression suddenly hit the American market:³⁰

The depression of October 1929 caused the sale of phonographs and records in the US to drop so sharply that a new all-time low was reached in 1932. Record sales that year were probably not 10% of what they had been three years before.

This cataclysmic blow to the American recording industry soon hit England;

²⁵EMI, 1929, 11,14: to Australian agent: Peter Dawson 'has declined to sing this piece as he does not care for same'

²⁶EMI, 1925, 11.11, not the original Sullivan (died 1900) or Carte (died 1901) so may presume next generation running the d'Oyly Carte company. PD bonus approved at same meeting.

²⁷c. \$A3500

²⁸*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 79

²⁹Dawson, 1951, 131 ff.

³⁰Walsh, 1961

it was a little less dramatic but was more protracted. In 1930 several changes to the structure of the Gramophone Company became necessary.

The strain of running an expanding company had finally affected the long-time Chairman of the Board, Trevor Osmond Williams. Due to failing health he left the Board to be replaced by Alfred Clark, the Managing Director, one of those who stemmed from the early days of the phonograph in America.

The other successful disc company in England, not mentioned by Peter Dawson because he was tied exclusively to The Gramophone Company, was Columbia. When the Gramophone Company had bought out Zonophone at the turn of the century, the head of that company, Louis Sterling, set up the English branch of Columbia. The two companies may have been competing for market share, but the executives were all old friends. In view of the down-turn in the market, the two companies merged in March, 1931, Fred Gaisberg retained a roving brief as unofficial supervisor of the combined classical music departments,³¹ and Louis Sterling becoming Managing Director of the new group, which was renamed Electric and Musical Industries Ltd.

Since 1925 the new electrical recordings of orchestral and orchestrally supported works had been made in the Small Queens Hall, a building of more appropriate size than the Hayes studio. The Hall had to be hired. Due to demands for bookings from various organisations it became more imperative for the new company to find its own recording accommodation. So No. 3 Abbey Road, St. John's Wood, which 'was converted to an orchestral studio on the scale and with the acoustics of a concert hall, with smaller studios and offices integrated', was opened in November, 1931.³²

In the meantime Peter Dawson's five-year contract had come up for renewal on 9th September, 1930. He had moved to the address which is stamped on the greater part of his personal archival music: 10 Evelyn Grove, Ealing Common, close to Hayes but a train or car trip to the West End or Abbey Road Studios.

Various earnings have been publicised: the 1923 figure of £23,000³³, from others '£14,500, the highest figure between the wars and \$6000 in royalties,³⁴ 'on his way to £15,000 a year', his highest earnings, in 1934.³⁵ The figure of \$23,000 purports to have been achieved 'in 1923 when electric recordings were introduced' because he 'had to remake all my old titles': the year could be 1925, the year of the massive bonus³⁶, although he did not make all the

³¹Moore, J., 1977, 186-7, among others

³²Moore, J., 1977, photo XII, opp. 169

³³stems from Australian newspaper, 1956, 07.07: 'but one year - 1923 - when electric recordings were introduced I had to remake all my old titles and my cheque went up to £23000'; the sum is repeated in Hobart newspaper 1962, 01; electrical recording 1923 also in newspaper 1962, 12.26; newspaper, 1991, 08.23

³⁴Glennon, *ADB*, 1981, London newspaper, 1955, 05.14: "At the peak I suppose I was earning £14000 to £15000 a year."; Australian newspaper, 1991, 08.23: Height of 50-year singing career the then huge income of \$40000 a year [£16000]

³⁵London newspaper, 1955, 04.26

³⁶Spreading the sum over five years it would be £1800 per annum or 1996 \$A70000, \$A350,000 total, but as Peter Dawson had to spend the money immediately \$A197,500 + \$A39,500 p.a.

titles in that year, but in 1930 his contract was increased again, the best recording contract he ever had.

The new contract for three years to September, 1933, was not signed until 14th October³⁷, indicating again that negotiations had been unresolved until then. The effect of the Depression was being felt, but the Company must have remained optimistic, for Peter Dawson was to receive a £3000 retainer on signing plus a guarantee against royalties on 'Gramophone records actually manufactured and sold' of £2500 per annum cumulative; the total sum to be regarded as an advance against royalties; any loss to be carried forward. Although Peter Dawson received the £3000 on signing, the total package covered the three years, that is, £10500 or an average 3500 each year.³⁸

These details are slight variations on the 1925 contract but a few new clauses appear: a continuing royalties inheritance clause in favour of Nan, rephrased exclusivity and renewal clauses, and, as a sign of the times, freedom to broadcast, and a 'Film & Television' clause:

The Company not unreasonably to withhold permission if and when requested for the artiste to make Talking Films or to perform for the purposes of Television

the more interesting as Television did not exist commercially in England, yet it must have been a known possibility to the Company and to Peter Dawson.

The imminent Dawson/Hambourg tour of 1931 caused a flurry of activity in London and in Australia. In March, 1931 he and Mark Hambourg were honoured at a dinner, which celebrated his 25 years of recording, an excellent gambit for publicity. The London papers all carried the story of the luncheon at the Savoy on Thursday, 19th March, chaired by Sir Alfred Clark, who presented the most modern Gramophone, *Model 521*. Accolades flooded in, old times were remembered, anecdotes were told. *The Voice* waxed lyrical, adding that Peter Dawson had had to rush off to performances at the Palladium;³⁹ the tour publicity now credited him with 3000 titles and sales of 10 million.⁴⁰ The exercise was a complete success. The impression is given that the Company fell over itself to honour Peter Dawson, but a note that 'this matter was first raised by Peter Dawson',⁴¹ indicates that Peter Dawson understood the value of generating publicity. Similarly, the impression is given that no other singer had ever sung so many titles, although his colleague George Baker also celebrated 25 years service and 3000 records at the end of the year.⁴²

Naturally, both EMI and its Australian agents wanted to exploit the

thereafter.

³⁷EMI, 1930, 10.14

³⁸1930 received £5500 = 1996 c. \$A180,000; average over three years £3500 = c.\$A110,000; £2500 = c.\$A80,000 by 1933

³⁹EMI, 1931, 04.00; the Palladium recital was broadcast by the BBC - see Chapter 5.

⁴⁰programme, 1931, 06.06; tour advert Melbourne season c. May/June 1931; newspaper, 1931, 09.22

⁴¹EMI, 1931, 03.09

⁴²newspaper, 1931, 11.18

popularity of both touring artists, which was at its zenith. Peter Dawson had not been in Australia since 1919, so it was reasonable to expect he would be welcomed like a prodigal son. Apart from their regular HMV series London recorded a special 'E' series for distribution in Australia only, which often contained Australia compositions. In response to a suggestion from Australia, EMI agreed to make two topical songs: *Advance Australia Fair* and *On The Road to Gundagai*, if the break-even sales of 'Four thousand five hundred ten inch Plum records' could be guaranteed.⁴³ *Advance Australia Fair*⁴⁴ eventually became the 'national anthem', although it would be far into the future before any Australian could even contemplate not rising to attention, placing the hat over the heart and fervently singing *God Save the King*. 'Where the dog sits on the tucker-box, five miles from Gundagai' tells the sad story of a faithful dog, who died protecting the lunch-tin of a master, who never returned. A statue has been erected to mark the spot. Written in quasi folk-song style, the song is no better than the earlier Will Strong fillers; it is a song which fits him ill, nevertheless he made it popular. The numbers were backed by an orchestra and a male quartet, in which his old colleague, Edward Halland, was invited to sing the bass line for £5.5.0.⁴⁵ The 'extremely successful' records were recorded in March and dispatched to Australia, on 16 April, along with a group of other records, including *Asleep in the Deep* which was made in the same session. Following Peter Dawson's wheezy 1907 version, this superior new recording of *Asleep in the Deep*, now divided into two parts, Part 1 - *The Storm*: Part 2 - *The Calm*, was played at the luncheon, to everybody's satisfaction. The other recordings were sent to Australia in advance of release:

Before these artistes left for their tours in Australia they held several recording sessions and the titles are in reserve or have been scheduled for issue on future Supplements⁴⁶

Though despatched on 14th, the 'next plane' did not leave 'until 25th'.⁴⁷ The agents were 'particularly pleased' when the records arrived by the 15 May, just in time for the tour, which commenced on 16th. The records range from *Yon assassin is my equal* (Rigoletto) and *Tempest of the heart* (Il Trovatore), two of the excellent remakes of his popular arias; quality English art-song/ballads, like Amy Woodforde-Finden's *Jhelum Boat Song*, *Kingfisher Blue*; and a swodge of those old stalwarts, more commonly associated with his name: *The Cobbler's Song*, *The Mountains o' Mourne*, *I travel the road*, *Shipmates of mine*, *Father O'Flynn*, *When the guards go marching by*.

The quality of demanding serious works like the November 1930 recordings, *Rolling in foaming billows* from Haydn's *Creation*, and *Through the darkness* from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*., suggested to Burgis that Peter Dawson was only used for solo work from 1925 onward. This could be

⁴³EMI, 1931, 02.25

⁴⁴see *Song of Australia* and footnote below

⁴⁵= c.\$A150 today

⁴⁶EMI, 1931, 04.16

⁴⁷So air-transport was now a commercial proposition.

true, although his contract still specified ensembles.

In his book, Peter Dawson links a number of 'really fine marching songs' which are 'most inspiring' with 1936 crisis numbers,⁴⁸ but they appear in the 1934 catalogue, and were, in fact, recorded in March, 1932. The words⁴⁹ had been 'set to some of the fine old tunes played by military bands'. That he was backed by a male chorus, some of whom, for example, George Baker, Edward Halland and Walter Glynne, had been featured artists on recordings as long as Peter Dawson himself, is a fair indication of the plight of performers at that time.

Because the same chorus was used, the impression is given that Stanford's *Songs of the Sea*, one of his favourite collections, was recorded at the same time, but these songs were recorded more than half a year later, in January 1933. Of Stanford's four quality ballads *Drake's Drum* is remembered as a Peter Dawson ballad in its own right. As the combination is the same, an undated photograph showing him recording *The Legion of the Lost*,⁵⁰ a lusty marching song, at the Kingsway Hall possibly refers to the same sessions.

The range of styles continues: in February 1932 two more 'E' series for Australia, *Bells & Hobbles* and Carl Linger's *Song of Australia*, for which the exact costings are available:⁵¹

<u>"Bells and Hobbles"</u>		<u>(\$A1996)</u>	
Orchestra & arranging Band Parts	£17. 4. 6		(500)
<u>"Song of Australia"</u>			
Orchestra	15. 3. 8		
Arranging Band Parts	5. 5. 0		
Chorus - 4 singers @	£3. 3. 0	<u>12. 12. 0</u>	
*		£33 0. 8	(950)
<u>total</u>		£50. 5. 2 =	(1450)

Peter Dawson had a particular affection for *Song of Australia*. In 1957 a newspaper correspondent reminded Adelaide readers of the passage in Peter Dawson's book, in which he hoped that *Song of Australia*, which had been accepted as the national anthem after a competition in 1859, would be retained as the National Anthem rather than the 'recently'⁵² promoted *Advance Australia Fair*.

In March he recorded a group titled, *O sing me an Irish song*, which comprised: *When I hear an Irish song*, *The Londonderry Air*, *Killarney*, and *Come Back to Erin* with soprano, chorus and orchestra. The songs,

⁴⁸Dawson, 1933

⁴⁹attributed to 'a young assistant at Chappell's'

⁵⁰published in 1932 by J. Albert, Sydney, with the rubric 'sung & recorded by Peter Dawson'; appears in the 1933/34 HMV catalogue.

⁵¹EMI, 1932, 03.02

⁵²Dawson, 1951, 166. The date of *Song of Australia* is open to question. It was a South Australian song, not a national anthem, for SA was a colony of the British Empire at the time. Nevertheless, it was popular: Etta Clark, *Music in the Home* in McCredie (ed) 1988: 'The popularity of Carl Linger's *Song of Australia* can be seen from the numerous editions in which it appeared, several locally produced.'

which had long been favourites, had almost taken on the character of folk songs. *Come Back to Erin*, for example, one of 'more than 100 "Parlour" songs' written by Claribel, the nom-de-plume of Mrs Charlotte Barnard (1830-1869), was already a popular song during his childhood.⁵³ *Old Father Thames*⁵⁴, which became permanently associated with his name, appeared in March, as soon as it was published, in preparation for his coming tour of Australia in April 'under the management of J. C. Williamson Ltd.'⁵⁵

Before the tour, in February 1933, he received an unexpected financial shock: the £4000 he had received in 1925, as a bonus for his twenty-year service, had come under scrutiny by the Taxation Department. As he was a tall poppy the department may have presumed his income to be in excess of that which he had declared, and an investigation revealed that he had not declared this amount. The *Peter Dawson vs Income Tax Inspector* saga⁵⁶ was not resolved for sixteen months, Peter Dawson tenaciously arguing that the amount was a gift, the taxation authorities arguing that it was earnings, and should be charged Income Tax pro-rata over the past twenty years. Peter Dawson appealed the decision and sought the support of the Company. The Company was quite prepared to confirm that the amount of £4000 had been paid under a quite separate clause, that it had been paid in recognition of his twenty-year association with the Company, and that the 'sum was not part of, nor an advance against the royalties'.

The matter appears to have rested while he was on tour, but in October the Company responded to a Taxation Department request by sending a copy of the Minute from the Board, which had authorised the payment. In November, in the middle of discussions about his contract renewal, the Managing Director was advised that 'Dawson's Income Tax Appeal may have failed' but not until the end of the following May was the decision clear: the revenue department had spread the £4000 over the five years 1925-30 at the rate of 4/- in the £, plus compound interest 'on the amount of tax calculated from the dates when it became payable', a claim of more than £800.⁵⁷ Peter Dawson sought a loan from the Company but he was turned down.

While financial discussions were proceeding, he recorded two of his own compositions in the best ballad style, *Song of the Drum* and *Westward Ho!*, which he had premiered at the end of January on the BBC before the 1933 tour of Australasia. He returned from that tour, ostensibly successful,⁵⁸ although he admitted that 'wireless had badly hit the sale of records', and also blamed 'high tariffs and the rate of exchange'.

Peter Dawson may have survived the Depression, but the industry had not. Historically, the Depression ended in 1932/33, but the effects were long-lasting. On a tour to South Africa in early 1935 Peter Dawson reported that

⁵³Clark, 446.

⁵⁴in NFSA, MS5030, music folio I: *Old Father Thames*, pub. Wright, London, 1933

⁵⁵EMI, 1933, 01.11: Gramophone Company in Sydney to link advertising to tour

⁵⁶EMI, 1933, 02.06 ff.

⁵⁷now \$A23000

⁵⁸Dawson, 1933, 11.06 to Leslie Boosey: 'very successful in every way'

bundles of records 'were selling for a few cents'⁵⁹ and he claims that it was 1935 when Louis Sterling, head of EMI, told him that the sales of records were so bad that they were retooling Hayes to make wireless receivers and radiograms.⁶⁰ But it also produced gramophones. In a determined effort to sell more records Sterling produced 'the famous "Banjo Player": small, compact, rounded at one end, little bigger than the turntable to hold the 78rpm disc. It sold at 39/6 (6d short of £2)⁶¹ and it is said that 'the success of this ad was to benefit the whole record industry'.⁶²

American business, driving the economic recovery, muscled in on territory long the province of Europe, England in particular. Being led by expatriate Americans with business connections to their old companies in the USA, the English record companies were well aware of American trends. The advent of the microphone had produced an American phenomenon: the microphone-assisted undistinguished voice; the casual, any-untrained singer-who-wants-to product of an egalitarian society: the crooner. Indigenous too was Jazz, an influence since World War 1, and its expansion into large swing bands. Thirties recordings by American companies were 'produced predominantly for crooner, jazz or swing band enthusiasts'.⁶³

Popular motion pictures and musicals originated in America; Hollywood was coming into its own. American culture encroached inexorably on English culture. Promoters were desperate to find anything new which might sell. Some sections of the public embraced the invasion, found it revitalising, but the conservatives resisted it. Cultured singers like Peter Dawson were inexperienced in the style and rhythmic feel of popular American music; a couple of attempts by Peter Dawson were decidedly unacceptable to the public which had supported him for decades. Peter Dawson had become a legend: straight-forward, manly, authoritative, he epitomised the Englishman's conception of a good singer - and he had to stick to what he could do best. He was over fifty. For the younger generation he was old-fashioned. Although taste for Peter Dawson's ballads never disappeared as long as his generation lived, the forces of the future were in the ascendancy: his firm place was in a slowly dwindling niche market.

The first signs of the downward spiral appeared when his contract came up for renewal. Agreement was due by 9 September 1933 but it could be postponed by Peter Dawson's advocates because Peter Dawson was still in Australia. But even when he arrived back in England at the end of October signing was delayed. He met with the Managing Director on the matter of the Taxation Appeal but that was only one of 'several reasons why Peter Dawson may want to see you', an indication that the adviser thought that Peter Dawson wanted to express his dissatisfaction with the proposed terms personally. To convince the Board the EMI accountants drew up a

⁵⁹Walsh, 1961. Dawson, 1951, 132: 'had been selling records in 'bargain bundles... turned their attention ... to household goods.

⁶⁰Dawson, 1951, 133; also in Walsh but Dawson paraphrased.

⁶¹the \$1.99 ploy. £2 = \$A65

⁶²*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 94

⁶³Walsh, 1961

memorandum in November⁶⁴ which amply demonstrated that royalty losses had been accumulating under Peter Dawson's contract for some time. There were 91 records listed by the English Branch, and another four masters in reserve to be published in the December Supplement. During the last three years royalties earned were:

	<u>10"</u>	<u>12"</u>	<u>Royalty Earned</u>
30/31	158,417	104,453	£2364. 8.11
31/32	138,521	43,617	1348. 7. 1
32/33	<u>100,257</u>	<u>35,587</u>	<u>1017. 13. 4</u>
	<u>397,195</u>	<u>183,657</u>	<u>£4730. 9. 4</u>

The Royalty value of the contract was £7500 and there was a small short-fall of £250 on the previous contract making £7750. Therefore the loss or 'unearned balance' was £3019.10.8. It has already been demonstrated that the Company needed sales of c.1.2 million Plum label records to cover his guarantee; approximately the same would have been needed for this combination of 10" and 12". But his total sales only amounted to 580852, about half the required amount. It was also established that due to general business conditions sales in Australia were down.⁶⁵ So in the then current market it would have been impossible for Peter Dawson to produce sales which would warrant a continuation of the old contract and also recover the amount unearned.

Faced with the facts, Peter Dawson's response was to say he would sign up with an opposition company and take his good name with him. The Directors decided to resolved their dilemma by offering him £1250 p.a.⁶⁶ guarantee for three years, and to write off the unearned balance as at 31 December 1933, leaving any excess royalties earned to artiste:

Having regard to the prestige and wide popularity still enjoyed by Peter Dawson, and the fact that for recording and broadcasting purposes, his voice and style are as effective as ever, it is considered advisable to make a new contract with the artiste on the above terms rather than lose his services to a competitive company.

Peter Dawson was still miffed but pragmatic; although the offer was effectively one third of the previous three years, he recognised that his income for those years had been wildly out of proportion to the Company's earnings. Mr Sterling could report to the Board that he had signed on 14 December for another two years.⁶⁷

The Company did not intend to waste its money. Peter Dawson again became their 'handy-man'. On two pages of the 1934/35 catalogue 174 solo discs are listed; they belong to one end or other of the scale of Peter Dawson songs, and include Allison's *Tramping through the Countryside* or his grand old *The Lute Player* recorded in March, along with yet another version of *The Floral Dance*, reviewed as 'the original must have sold in

⁶⁴EMI, 1933, 11.07

⁶⁵EMI, 1933, 11.18: 'Peter Dawson sales have dropped in Australia in proportion to his English sales; used to be 12-14% of English now only 7-9%'.
⁶⁶\$A36,000

⁶⁷EMI, 1934, 01.24 - not three

thousands and this new one is magnificent ... the classic performance of *Floral Dance*, the sheer artistry is overwhelming'.

In January he recorded his own McCall number *Glory of the Motherland*; at the end of the year the beautiful, lyrical *Trees* accompanied by his life-long friend the organist, Herbert Dawson, with the livelier *The Man in the Street*, by When-the-Sergeant-Major's-On-Parade Longstaffe, which had just been published, on the reverse.⁶⁸

One newspaper at least⁶⁹ liked *Man in the Street*. It saw it as part of the resurgence of the ballad, led by men like Peter Dawson. 'That musical abortion, "Jazz", which emanated from the jungle ... has had its day', it begins; 'but what about the recent ballads? Is there a revival? There definitely is!' it continues. The old-stagers that 'outlived the last slump' were nearly all recorded by Peter Dawson: *Bless This House*, *The Old Violin*, *Trees*, *Song of Songs*, *For you alone*; the Longstaffe number belongs to the new successes.

But what is the use of having a good name if you cannot use it? He even recorded two duets, the shanty style *Sons of the Sea*, and the nightmarish *Watchman what of the night* - with himself. In September, 1935, just when his contract was coming up for renewal again, he recorded *Uncle Peter's Children's Party* with a children's choir and orchestra:⁷⁰

- | | |
|-----|--|
| a) | <i>Girls and boys come out to play</i> |
| b)* | <i>Oranges and lemons</i> |
| c)* | <i>Old King Cole</i> |
| d) | <i>Pop goes the weasel</i> |
| e) | <i>Baa, baa black sheep</i> |
| f) | <i>Hickory, dickory dock</i> |
| g)* | <i>A frog he would a-wooing go</i> |

and in November, while contract negotiations were still proceeding he recorded *Peter Dawson's Christmas Party* (Part 1), for release to the Christmas market. The performers, *Peter Dawson and Friends*, were a male quartet singing and talking; the only traditional Christmas number was *Good King Wenceslas*, the rest is a muddle ranging from tin whistle and mouth organ solo, through to *Mai Pahi Aipo*,⁷¹ a Maori song foreshadowing *Waiata Poi*, and the *Gendarmes Duet*. The recording is remembered because he revealed publicly for the first time that he was indeed the composer J. P. McCall. In Burgis' opinion the tin whistle and mouth organ could have been played by Peter Dawson, for 'we know that he possessed such instruments and played them'.⁷² The conglomeration smacks of Peter Dawson's taste and humour. Part 2 appeared the following year as *Uncle Peter's Xmas Party* - for children!

⁶⁸NFSA, MS5030, music folio I: *The Man in the Street*, Aschenberger, London, 1934

⁶⁹newspaper, 1935, 11.00: *The Ballad Comes Back* -reprinted from *Sound Wave*, November 1935'

⁷⁰* = sung by Peter Dawson

⁷¹suggests the Alfred Hill setting of *Waiata Maori*, using first line instead of title. On the copy of *Waiata Maori* held in MS5030 a note by PD that published by the Dunedin librettist, John McIndoe. *Waiata Maori* not dated but *Waiata Poi*, also by Alfred Hill, published Chappell, Sydney, 1908.

⁷²Burgis, 1981. *Ambassador of Song*, Record 10.

Though the electrical system was still new, companies dreamed already of a record with finer threads which could provide more playing time. The possibility had been canvassed in *The Gramophone* in 1926 but first 'long-playing records, with not only finer thread but a slower speed, 33 rpm, were first issued in 1950 by English Decca⁷³. In 1935 EMI was carrying out experiments using various voices and the London Philharmonic. One of the voices was Peter Dawson, singing *Sea Call*, which was 'down 2db'.⁷⁴ The researchers felt that it was 'doubtful therefore whether the market is yet ripe for a finer thread record' so it was left for the time being.

Behind the scenes Peter Dawson may have been becoming a liability, but overtly he remained steadfastly in the public eye. A devotee, writing to the PDAS in 1983⁷⁵, remembered that he bought his first record *Young Tom O' Devon* in 1935 and had worn it out. Newspapers could attach any sort of nonsense to his name; one offered⁷⁶ *Things I Hate* by Peter Dawson', which ranged from professional quibbles to '7. Squeaky boots' and '11. Ice cream'. EMI too continued to advertise the appropriate material strongly wherever it could. When advised the Company that he intended to tour South Africa in 1935, he was immediately asked for a list of his repertoire, which he sent two weeks later with the exact commencement date of the tour.⁷⁷ One result was the promotion of a recent recording of two Chappell publications: Alba Rizzi's new song, *Little Prayer I Love You*, with *Trees* on the other side, which in the opinion of the Gramophone Company was 'one of the best Dawson has made in a long time and should have a big sale'.⁷⁸

In December The Gramophone Company sent a recent biography of Peter Dawson to its Sydney sales office to use as promotional material. It is quite usual for an employer to ask an artist to draft a biography; programmes are full of them. They invariably bury the artist in excessive praise and artists take exception if something is altered or omitted. The tenor of this writing suggests that it was written by Peter Dawson himself; the criteria apply: it indicates that he was very aware of his importance in the mind of the public. Privately he may have been hail-fellow-well-met, but this biography is pompous, self-indulgent, attempts to sound literary but fails. He 'has risen to such eminence throughout the world' because he 'takes his art seriously', his songs will educate while they delight, 'Peter Dawson is a true artist, and true artists are rare'. Even the 'mechanical' side of his art would 'precipitate him out of the ruck of the mediocre'. The reference to Australian football may have been inspired when he opened the season in Adelaide in 1933.⁷⁹ In this biography and EMI advertising on the 1933 tour his sales were ten million.

⁷³*Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 193

⁷⁴EMI, 01.08. db = decibels

⁷⁵Young, Cyril, 1983, 01.12

⁷⁶London newspaper, 1935, 06.08

⁷⁷EMI, 1934, 10.02; Dawson, 1934, 11.03

⁷⁸EMI, 1935, 01.28; both numbers held NFSA, MS5030, *muisc folios. Trees* pub Sydney 1922, *Little Prayer I Love You*, which he often used, only as Chappell ms. and BBC copy for broadcast 1935, 05.05

⁷⁹newspaper, 1933, 04.29

His contract came up for renewal again in 1935. This was the year that the catalogue carried over 200 entries under his name, the bulk of which are still in the bass and baritone repertoire to this day. Yet, although his repertoire held a dominant position in the Catalogue, he no longer held a dominant position in the market.

To prove the point the financial controllers at the Company prepared a document for the Board in mid-1934, to demonstrate that the investment in Peter Dawson was excessive.⁸⁰ The exercise was presumably a function carried out for all artists, but in the case of Peter Dawson it was like touching a taboo. His national and international popularity was still influencing the decision makers. His name was valuable by the Company; but what price should be put on Goodwill?

Sales in the first quarter of 1934 showed that he was 'earning about half his guaranteed advance'. He was credited with:

records in Catalogue 31/12/33:

	<u>10"</u>	<u>12"</u>	<u>Total</u>
	55	30	85
(to be) issued Jan/March 34	<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>
			<u>88</u>

Although the 'unearned' amount from the previous contract had been officially forgotten, the amount 'written off' was again brought to the attention of the Executive, and the figures for the four years, 1930-1934, converted into two graphs. Graph 1 had two lines showing 'Earnings' against 'Advances'; the gap between the two lines, 'Unearned Advances', demonstrated that Earnings were never as high as Advances. Earnings and Advances began in June, 1930 at under £500; by June 1934 Advances had risen to nearly £9000 while Earnings had only reached £5500. Graph 2 showed 'Royalty Earnings' at each half-year. Because of the way royalties were calculated there was a rise and fall between Decembers and Junes, but when the highs and lows were connected the pattern demonstrated that the maximum royalties - and therefore the maximum sales - which were c.£1500 in December 1930 were down to c.£300 by June 1934.

With this information it could be expected that negotiations for the next contract would be torrid. The new contract, 9 September, 1935 for two years could not be agreed until 18 December, for exactly the same total amount, but expressed differently: a £1500 'Retainer' on signing plus a further £1000 in eight quarterly payments of £125.⁸¹

For the first time a document reveals that Tom Noble was Peter Dawson's manager.⁸² Letters were written by Peter Dawson but he was represented at negotiations by Tom Noble, whose nature was better suited to business transactions. There had been several bones of contention,⁸³ among them that Peter Dawson could definitely not repeat titles for another company. But the major argument was over a royalty for the broadcast of recordings.

⁸⁰EMI, 1934, 06.08

⁸¹EMI, 1935, 12.18. £1500 + £500 pa, total £2500, av. £1250. \$A 33500 pa

⁸²EMI, 1935.12.04

⁸³EMI, 1935, 11.23, 12.04, 12.05, 1936, 01.09

Peter Dawson's persistence and justified indignation were eventually resolved for the benefit of artistes as a whole. For a long time the industry and broadcasters were not prepared to concede that an artiste should be recompensed for the use of recordings other than the payment for the original performance. Despite the artistes' argument that they lost income when they lost the opportunity to perform personally; that they lost the opportunity to make a different recording; that sales of their records would be lost if their audience could listen to it on the wireless instead of buying it, the broadcasters, who had an easy way of filling their programmes at little cost, remained obdurate,

Peter Dawson could see the inroads that wireless was making on record sales and blamed the lack of EMI sales of his records completely on this new medium, not on any waning popularity. When he was roused Peter Dawson was dour: in November 'he insists that the broadcasting fees should be mentioned'; two weeks later: 'refused to sign; objects to broadcast clause'. Although artistes received no royalty on records broadcast, Peter Dawson was aware that the Company had resolved the issue in favour of itself, so he continued to insist on a Broadcast clause:

Provided the artiste receives his ratio of the percentage of fees received by
The Gramophone Company for the broadcasting of the artiste's records in
Great Britain and throughout the world.

The Company had difficulty with this clause. It pointed out that an organisation, Phonographic Performance, had been created in England to collect royalties for companies and could be used to collect royalties for artists, but no such organisation existed elsewhere. It pointed out that collating royalties from Australia, for example, was not yet practical. Peter Dawson signed the contract for England, leaving 'throughout the world' to be resolved.

For the duration of this contract the search for material which would capitalise on Peter Dawson's name and talent took some strange turns. The 'crisis songs', alluded to in the discussion of 1932/33 recordings, were a series of hillbilly or cowboy songs, which were the rage in 1936/1937, for example, June, 1936: *Saddle your blues to a wild Mustang, Rolling along* and *There'll be no South* from the film, *The music goes round*. One reviewer believed 'Mr Dawson could not make a dull record if he tried'; another asked if he was going to end his illustrious career in this shoddy way, for there was a rumour current in June that Peter Dawson, now 54, was about to retire. Peter Dawson quickly scotched it:⁸⁴

"I'm going on as well as ever. People think I'm an old crony because I sing so many ballads which their fathers and grandfathers have sung. Do you know, at times I'm treated with the veneration and respect of the aged and I'm a young man. Why, the other day I was asked if I played bowls!"

and, never one to miss a chance to promote his latest offerings, continued:

⁸⁴ London newspaper, 1937, 07.06: Peter Dawson giving up career; another London newspaper, 1936, 07.06: *Mr. Dawson - Encore, Ready for Another 50 Years' Singing*

Film Songs Worth Keeping

Young Mr Dawson is annoyed with the blasé way people treat the films. "There are some marvellous songs in some of the recent shows," he said. "It seems such a pity they don't live."

But his public had a different view. *Covered Wagon Lullaby* and *Empty Saddles*, both from the film *Rhythm On The Range*, were greeted with an honest 'sorry he has fallen for the hill-billy'. There were more songs from films and also popular songs of the music hall variety like: ['... and what did we see'] *We saw the sea* and *With a shillelagh under me arm* ['and a twinkle in me eye ...'].⁸⁵ In November he recorded *Song of the grateful heart*, written to cash in on the forthcoming Coronation, with the popular *There's a bridle hanging on the wall*, as Western prairie as any American song, on the reverse. When the songs appeared for the Christmas market the disappointed critic began: '*Song of the Grateful Heart* - Here is hope'; '*There's a bridle hanging on the wall* - Here is despair.'

Peter Dawson acknowledges the public dissatisfaction:⁸⁶ 'I received hundreds of letters abusing me for singing such songs' but, being aware of his volatile position at the Company could justify the recordings because 'they sold well' - and had he not sung in this style as Will Strong or Will Danby? Fortunately for his fans 'Peter Dawson' emerges unscathed from the prairie' within the following twelve months with *Mother o' Mine* and *Danny Deeever*, *Hybrias the Cretan*, which he had sung on his tour with Madame Albani in 1903, and two McCall ballads tailored to his own style, *The Jolly Roger* and *Fretfoot*.

On 14 October 1936, again with orchestra and male chorus he had recorded a pantheon of 'magnificently sung' patriotic songs: *Hearts of Oak*, *We are the Boys of the Old Brigade*, *Soldiers of the King*, *Private Tommy Atkins*, *The British Grenadiers*, *Red White and Blue*, *The Lads in Navy Blue*, *Here's a Health unto His Majesty*, and *Rule Britannia*, which were released in April for the Coronation of King George VI in May 1937.

And the publicity never stops. A contemporary photograph⁸⁷ shows him seated, with rakish hat, holding a cigarette - the epitome of worldly elegance and sophistication. His contract was coming up for renewal again. As the last one had caused some headaches, the next would hardly be without problems. Long before he signed forces were being marshalled against him. The report which the Board had chosen to ignore two years previously was still extant. Nevertheless, in August 1937 he was still seen representing The Company at the annual Radio Exhibition at Olympia,⁸⁸ and the August edition of *The Voice* carried a substantial profile of him as *Famous Recording Personalities - No. 4*. The storm clouds were gathering but the article was as flattering as if he were still to reach the peak of his fame: 'time seems to make no difference to the rich voice, clear diction and perfect rightness of this remarkable singer.' A two-column biography, lifted directly from the February, 1926 edition, concluded:

⁸⁵possibly sung from the manuscript held in his documents (MS5030, music folio N.)

⁸⁶Dawson, 1951, 133

⁸⁷EMI, 1936, 08.10: photo signed, dated Aug 10 1936

⁸⁸EMI 1937, 09.27: 'Olympia last month'

For more than 30 years a Peter Dawson record of an English ballad has been the accepted standard. Every young man who carried "Tommy Lad" in his music case did his best to sing it like Peter Dawson⁸⁹

The rest was padded with up-dated material and, for easy reading, a few fire-side-chat anecdotes like:

When I saw Peter Dawson at a recording session last month ... little white terrier, "Tess", [with him], not unlike the immortal "Nipper".⁹⁰ Peter told me that when his records come home, "Tess" listens to them, and then goes around the back looking for the band.

The sales pitch never slackened: it could be said that as sales went down, the 'hype' (hyperbole) went up. Even an appearance at Selfridges was woven into the fabric of the year. When the *Daily Mail* advertised that 'you can see a £30,000 collection of Crown Jewel replicas, hear Peter Dawson sing (3 p.m.), enter your dog free (if he's a Tailwagger)'⁹¹ during Selfridges' twenty-eight birthday week, it hardly seemed connected to EMI, but it was another promotion, because the Company paid Hubert Greenslade, Peter Dawson's accompanist, a princely £2.2.0 for the job.⁹²

One London newspaper⁹³ lauds Ben Davis, 79, and Peter Dawson, 54, as the *Voices of the Year*; in another Peter Dawson pontificates on *Ballads we once endured*:⁹⁴

"The old-time, sweetly sentimental ballad of the drawing-room type is dead," he said. "The wireless and the gramophone - and the war - have killed it. A new type of song - the Art Song - has taken its place. Gone are 'The Bandolero' and 'The Bedouin's Love Song'.

As the day of huge sales had gone Peter Dawson attempted to arrange a tour of the USA. From correspondence it appears that any performance activity was fairly slack at the time⁹⁵ so he felt forced to make an effort to enter a market he had ignored in the past. Between August, 1936 and October, 1937 he tried to organise a tour in the USA through Company contacts.⁹⁶ The Company, which had tremendous respect for him, did what it could to help. The American Saga began with an optimistic exchange of programmes, photographs and biographies. In September Peter Dawson was advised by the Company that they had 'drawn a blank with NBC Artists' Service', but gave him another personal contact.

A few weeks later a very warm letter of introduction was written to

⁸⁹1907 (cited in Chapter 3 - Part 1). Burgis, in letter 1996, 08.16 advises *Tommy Lad*: Zonophone X-42625, 10", single-sided, issued October 1907; Amberol cylinder 12312, 4-minute, issued June 1911; 10" double-side HMV B8540 re-issued March 1937.

⁹⁰ the HMV dog

⁹¹newspaper, 1937, 03.08

⁹²EMI, 1937, 05.10

⁹³newspaper, 1937, no day or month

⁹⁴newspaper, n.d. but this period from the text and composers cited.

⁹⁵EMI, 1936, 09.24

⁹⁶EMI, 1936, 08.30 through to EMI, 1937, 10.05

Columbia Concerts Corporation, another major agency. From the letter Peter Dawson's strengths from the Company point of view can be evaluated:⁹⁷ 'more records than any other living baritone', 'repertoire embraces practically all categories of baritone music', 'especially strong in the hearty, jovial sea-songs, good-fellowship and tramp songs', 'easiest of singers', 'clear distinct diction', 'infectious speaking voice and laugh', 'any broadcast would be a winner': the recommendation could hardly have been warmer.

It concludes: 'any proposition would be favourably received', which in retrospect sounds a little anxious, as does a similar letter a week later to the London manager of the Columbia Broadcasting System, which said that Peter Dawson 'was most anxious get over to the U.S.A. for a try-out, even if it is without immediate profit'.

As Peter Dawson had the right to record for American Victor written into his contract there appears to have been an assumption by the Executive that he was featured in Victor's catalogue. But when they wanted to pass this information on to the National Broadcasting Corporation it turned out that:

we cannot trace that the Victor Company have ever listed Peter Dawson in the U.S.A. All they have done is to import pressings of his various records to a total of about 200 a year average.⁹⁸

From the *Victor* information the Company would have realised that the attempt at a tour was hopeless, but it supported him wherever it could. Even when the fracas over the next contract arose, another letter was sent. Unfortunately, 'over the years Management contacts with America had become fairly tenuous. Personal intervention did not help. The attempt was abortive. American popular music had moved much too far away from rollicking numbers like *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree*, or *Down at the Old Bull and Bush*. America had its own genuine cowboy and hillbilly singers, film music belonged to the new breed of lighter singers, *Old Man River* belonged to negro singers. Peter Dawson ballads were an English phenomenon, in which Americans had no interest. Had he tried before World War 1, who knows; now it was far too late.

In 1938 the dispute over the next contract arose not out of ill-will toward Peter Dawson, but pure pragmatism. Peter Dawson was in an invidious position: his stability was threatened, his standing was threatened. If he could not survive economically on the returns from his recordings he needed to capitalise on his name in other areas; any adverse publicity would be humiliating and demoralising. Those who had supported and nurtured him for so long could keep up the facade of popularity continually but were forced to accept the Company position financially.

In July, 1937, when contact was proposed with the Victor Company, it was appropriate to review Peter Dawson's financial position because his contract would have to be renegotiated within the next two months:

⁹⁷EMI, 1936, 09.24

⁹⁸EMI, 1937, 07.13

Sales Sept, 1935 - May 1937			
10" Plum - 22082 @ 5d -	467		
12" Plum - 3589 @ 1/3d -	<u>227</u> -	<u>694</u>	
Advance Royalty paid to date	2375		
+ Accompaniment costs	<u>742</u>	<u>3117</u>	
(in red) Net Loss		<u>£2423</u>	

The memorandum concludes: 'As it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable repertoire for Dawson, the renewal of his contract is not recommended'.⁹⁹

The outcome was what could be termed 'a notional contract'; both parties could say that Peter Dawson was tied to the company, but the guaranteed income was negligible compared with past contracts. Even if it represented a loss to the Company, it was one they could conveniently carry. The new terms had been discussed at Radiolympia: £50 per record on a basis of 12 issues (= guarantee £600); not continuing, less than half the previous contract. Peter Dawson's reaction was predictable: to him the last two contracts had been negligible; he felt that these old terms, at least, should continue. He suggested the negotiator apprise the General Manager, who would 'undoubtedly say: "Yes! sign Peter up on the terms contained in his last Contract. His name, plus past and present successes is well worth the price to us!"'¹⁰⁰ But he could not. Peter Dawson felt it was now a matter of honour so 'in the circumstances I have decided to cut the painter and give recording a rest',¹⁰¹ but a few days later, he had relented and a further meeting was arranged though he was advised that: 'I think you ought to know that the £600 figure according to sales is going to show us a loss'. Finally, on 27 January, 1938 an entirely new contract, which obliged the Company to pay for 20 titles @ £25 (= £500) but neither to record nor issue them, was drawn up for another year,¹⁰² although the truculent Peter Dawson did not sign it until March.

In the meantime problems arose from another quarter: the Taxation Department, like an avenging Fury, had delved into his financial affairs. In February the Company granted Peter Dawson an indefinite loan without interest¹⁰³ to cope with the problem, independent of the new contract being negotiated. The Tax Commissioners may have accepted his submission that the \$1500 received on signing was 'a loan', and was not subject to tax, but 'the revenue authorities' claimed that it was 'liable to tax under Schedule D'. Peter Dawson must have appealed the decision because it came to court. He even sought confirmation from the Company that it was a loan, but the Company would not be drawn into his personal affairs. The judgement in October was succinct: the £1500 was undoubtedly an advance against Royalties¹⁰⁴ and Peter Dawson had to pay tax on it.

As it was 'becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable repertoire for Dawson', what better way to solve the problem than recording something

⁹⁹EMI, 1937, 07.13

¹⁰⁰Dawson, 1937, 09.27

¹⁰¹Dawson, 1937, 10.05

¹⁰²EMI, 1938, 01.27 (now \$A12000)

¹⁰³EMI, 1938, 02.03

¹⁰⁴three London newspapers, 1938, 10.05

he had composed himself. In January he recorded *The 'Prentice Lads o' Cheap*, one of a number of McCall compositions published and recorded in 1937-38,¹⁰⁵ and in March, in the final throes of the turmoil over the contract Peter Dawson sang two songs, which were not on the market until September but eventually had rocketing sales: his own inimitable performance of Australian composer, Alfred Hill's New Zealand number, *Waiata Poi* sub-titled *Tiny Ball On End of String*, and arguably Australia's most famous song, the Banjo Paterson poem set to music by Marie Cowan: *Waltzing Matilda*.

If the Company wanted to catch an immediate market with songs from film or musicals, or to catch the Christmas market, for example, the songs were in the Supplements immediately. This six month delay suggests that the numbers were recorded to satisfy Peter Dawson without any strong belief in their market value. When the recording appeared in September, 1938, the critic glossed over *Waltzing Matilda* and dismissed *Waiata Poi* with: 'exceedingly noisy ... general racket not mitigated by the exuberance of the chorus'. As Peter Dawson recalled,¹⁰⁶ four Maori singers were needed for the chorus. At 11 a.m. the recording equipment broke down and the manager told the singers to come back at 3 p.m. They did - but very drunk. The recording had to go ahead. The Maoris were off key and their singing was wild, but the effect was marvellous.

The effect of a Peter Dawson performance of *Waiata Poi* may be gained from an EMI executive, whom Peter Dawson had invited to a live broadcast in the BBC concert hall in April, 1950:¹⁰⁷ 'we enjoyed it [the concert] immensely - particularly the Maori song, during which I was strongly tempted to jump up and "whoop" with you'. Peter Dawson makes the point that he had sung the song in 1914, but it had lain 'dormant for forty years'¹⁰⁸ and became a huge success in 1947.¹⁰⁹ He attributes its success to a BBC performance in September 1947 with the Kentucky Minstrels, the American negro ensemble, as 'chorus',¹¹⁰ but the 1938 coupling with *Waltzing Matilda* had probably already ensured its success.

Peter Dawson also had his version of the creation of *Waltzing Matilda*.¹¹¹ The generally accepted wisdom was voiced in 1995 newspaper articles covering the forthcoming centenary of its premiere:¹¹² Banjo Paterson wrote the 'his catchy lyric at Dagworth Station' near Winton Queensland 'over the Christmas holidays 1894-95' and the melody was put together by a fellow guest, Christina MacPherson who 'remembered a theme running through the early part' of *Craigielee*, a brass band march, 'composed by Scot, James Tannahill in the late 18th century', which she had heard at a race

¹⁰⁵*Old Kettledrum*, Boosey, 1937; *Fret Foot*, Prowse, 1938; *The Prentice Lads o' Cheap*, Ashdown, 1938 - discussed Chapter 6

¹⁰⁶newspaper, 1961, 10.02, *Wrong bar - the story of Waiata Poi*, a posthumous Peter Dawson anecdote.

¹⁰⁷EMI, 1950, 03.30, 04.05

¹⁰⁸*Waiata Poi*, Alfred Hill, pub Chappell, Sydney, 1908

¹⁰⁹Dawson, 1951, 160

¹¹⁰(author): not found in BBC Written Archives.

¹¹¹Dawson, 1951, 159

¹¹²Australian newspaper, 1995, 03.25: *Matilda's Ghost*; newspaper, 1995, 04.01: *Waltz of Words*

meeting in Warrnambool, Victoria. The Inglis Tea Company bought the rights to use the song as an advertisement for its *Billy Tea*, Marie Cowan, wife of an accountant with the firm, used the actual band score for the reconstruction of the tune as we know it. Although there is no supporting evidence, by tradition the premiere is celebrated as 6th April, 1895. True or not, the haunted water-hole has been significant for Winton tourism for many years.

Peter Dawson knew the 'supposedly authentic version', an earlier variant but similar to that used by the Winton entrepreneurs, as an 'extract from Thomas Wood's *Cobbers*' on copies of the standard Oxford University Press publication of the song. But he had other information: Marie Cowan had heard an old British Army marching tune at Warrnambool;¹¹³ 'Banjo' Peterson heard it 'and in a few hours they were collaborating'. Peter Dawson took a copy with him to London and recorded it.¹¹⁴ 'It had a big appeal', so a matrix was sent to Homebush, to which the Australian Manager responded brusquely: do not send 'any more of that sort of rubbish!'. However, when Peter Dawson actually sang the song on his return to Australia (in 1939), 'the demand was sensational'. When a wartime correspondent in Australia(?)¹¹⁵ was 'under the spell of that incomparable voice' singing *Waltzing Matilda*, the meaning was explained as:

Waltzing Matilda means sleeping under the stars; having your bath in a stream and using the sun for a towel: it means walking from one sheep station to another, and not seeing a human soul for days at a time. We've waltzed Matilda up and down Libya and Greece and Syria and before we've finished we'll waltz Matilda all over the great and glorious Reich and right up Unter den Linden! So look out, Hitler, for the Wizards of Aus!

Banjo Paterson's opinion of the original song was:¹¹⁶ 'a little Scottish tune ... not a very great literary achievement', and on that there should be some agreement. From the date of the premiere the swagman would have been a refugee from the depression of the 1890s; as Australians became familiar with the song during the Second World War they would have had strong memories of similar swagmen wandering the country in the Depression of the thirties.

Today, *Waiata Poi* is indelibly associated with his name, and for many *Waltzing Matilda* is our unofficial national anthem; the song that has been recorded by 450 different performers, the song that has stopped thousands of Aussie travellers on foreign shores and reminded them that they still call Australia home.¹¹⁷ The rocketing sales actually came during World War 2, after American troops had arrived in Australia. As a consequence, the song

¹¹³misprinted in his book as Waonambull. From Winton to Warrnambool, Vic is a long way, particularly if the song was composed in 1895. Warrnambool Downs, Q. would be closer.

¹¹⁴1938?

¹¹⁵newspaper, c.1943, *Waltz by Wizards of Aus*. A clipping among Peter Dawson's papers (MS5030/7/53) has no date or source. Date a guess from content which suggests propaganda in an Australian newspaper when the Americans were in Australia during WW2.

¹¹⁶Australian newspaper, 1995, 03.25

¹¹⁷Australian newspaper, 1995, 03.25:

which was made available in the USA by RCA Victor, 'may turn out to be the most popular of all [Peter Dawson songs]'.¹¹⁸

But the phenomenal sales of the 1938 colonial songs were still to come. In November, 1938 a critic mentioned that 'Peter Dawson disappeared from the list last month for the first time in living memory', so the effects of the last contract were being noticed. Fortunately, two quasi-sacred numbers, accompanied again by organist Herbert Dawson, appeared: his own (words: Dawson, music: McCall) *The Lord is King* and the already successful *Bless this house*, described as a 'masterpiece'.

In January 1939 the EMI administration brought the impending contract renewal to the attention of the Executive.¹¹⁹ A clause in Peter Dawson's contracts restrained him from signing for another company before six weeks after an old contract had lapsed, so it was agreed that a decision had to be made within that period. Two divergent views were presented: one that 'from a commercial point of view we are not particularly anxious to continue', another that they 'would not like Dawson to leave H.M.V. at the present time' and should 'personally negotiate with him'. It was noted that only fourteen of the 20 titles to which Peter Dawson had been committed under the 1938 contract, had been recorded. The account since 1930 was also appended:

<u>Contract</u> <u>Period</u>	<u>Advance</u>	<u>Royalty</u> <u>Earned</u>	<u>[Unearned]</u> <u>Balance</u>	
1930/33	£7500	£4907	£2592	w/off Dec '33
1933/35	2500	861	1639	
1935/37	2500	659	1841	
current	350	45	305	
			6377	
[+] Loan Feb 1938			500	
		(in red)	£6877 ¹²⁰	

There is no record of the discussions, but as the contract dates from 11 April 1939 and was not signed until 21st. - a few days before Peter Dawson left on an Australian tour - the discussions must have been similar those of the year before. Finally agreement was reached for 12 titles at a guarantee of £300, sung or not.¹²¹ The contract had included a right to extend for a further year, but Peter Dawson crossed that out.

A few songs were recorded or released in this period: two in particular,

¹¹⁸Walsh. 1961

¹¹⁹EMI, 1939, 01.23

¹²⁰(author): as 1930/33 amount was written off it is a bit rough adding it into the account again. If it is removed the result would be £4285. Adding the loan is also misleading as it was to be repaid when PD financial circumstances improved; result £3785; divided by 8 years c.£475 pa which does not look too excessive for keeping the name and status of such an artiste as PD at the masthead. The other point of view, the Company's: even at the minimum rate of 5d royalty per Plum record, they expected him to sell c.600,000 records in that period + an extra 24,000 to repay the £500 loan: on that same basis his actual sales would have been 306,000, not half the required number.

¹²¹EMI, 1939, 04.21; now \$A6845

Speak Music by Elgar, which raised the critics' hopes that he was 'reverting to the far-off days when he recorded good music' and *Rann of Exile* by Arnold Bax, which the reviewer liked too, although it was so difficult he could not make out what it was all about. Another recording, the old but beautiful *Drink to me only with Thine Eyes*, rerecorded with Herbert Dawson at the organ, drew the familiar, perennial praise: 'Mr Dawson can still knock 'em cold when he likes'.

Peter Dawson was not the only one nearing retirement. A retirement banquet for Fred Gaisberg, organised by an Honorary Committee - sixty eight names including Peter Dawson, 'a virtual encyclopedia of the world of music'¹²² - took place at the Savoy Hotel on 21 April. Two days earlier Peter Dawson had been advised that Fred would refer him in his address and would like him to sing at the dinner.¹²³ Despite the core of serious music and serious artists Fred Gaisberg had developed, he preferred entertainment 'of a lighter character and the artists were Richard Tauber, Gracie Fields, Peter Dawson, Mr Flotsam and Mr Jetsam,¹²⁴ Zomah the Unsolved Mystery, Oliver Wakefield and Ronald Frankau'.¹²⁵

Fred Gaisberg did not retire any more than Peter Dawson but their paths diverged for some years. Peter Dawson and Nan left for Australia a few days later. They must have travelled via Suez for they arrived in Perth on May 23rd en route to Sydney for the beginning the Greater Union Theatres Tour, which began in June.¹²⁶ On 24 May newspapers carried the news that Peter Dawson was to retire at the end of the tour. A few days later 'the world's "best-selling" baritone, who has received royalties from the sale of more than 12,000,000 gramophone records' rebutted categorically, headlined: '*Will sing until voice wears out*'.¹²⁷

The tour contract required him to leave Australia in October, but when the Second World War broke out in September he and Nan were stranded in Australia - so he never fulfilled the 1939 EMI contract. Perhaps Peter Dawson felt it was an omen. He could work with his brother in the canister factory and leave professional singing without losing face. In 31st October, 1939 newspapers again carried the announcement of his retirement.¹²⁸

His retirement was fairly notional: he was too famous, too much the successful son of Australia to remain idle. On the one hand, he willingly used his talents for the War Effort, on the other, he broadcast from various

¹²²Appendix 7, from Moore, J., 1977, 227

¹²³EMI, 1939, 04.19

¹²⁴composers of the highly successful 'Changing of the Guard', pub Melbourne 1930 [MS5030, music folio O] recorded and often sung by Peter Dawson which became a baritone standard. Mr Flotsam was a certain Hilliam and Mr Jetsam was the successful serious Australian bass, Malcolm McEachern, mentioned in association with William James' *Australian Bush Songs* in BBC broadcast 1923.

¹²⁵Moore, J., 1977, 230, taken from *The Voice*

¹²⁶Australian newspaper, 1939, 03.31: *Peter Dawson booked for Australian tour* 'last here in 1933'

¹²⁷i) newspaper, 1939, 05.24; ii) newspaper, 1939, 05.29

¹²⁸in one paper he is '57 year-old barytone', who 'Sold 4,000,000 Records'; in another: 10 million

radio stations: in July 1940 his first two patriotic songs, *Song of Australia* and *Swing along the Road to Victory*, appear on EMI's local Regal-Zonophone.

Another popular patriotic song of the period was Herman Darewiki's *The Army, the Navy, and the Air Force*, which the composer was keen to promote. EMI in Sydney advised Hayes that 'it is a stretch of imagination to talk about it being the official Australian and New Zealand marching song', in fact, they had a record of it, which did not sell; however, they could put it down as a 'probable' for the coming session with Peter Dawson to give it a chance.¹²⁹ But Peter Dawson was not showing any particular enthusiasm for a market as small as Australia, so Homebush was constrained to ask Hayes if they were interested in using him on Plum Labels.¹³⁰ Hayes' answer is not available, but the remaining recordings were made for EMI's Australian market 'E' series only.

The next example dates from August 1941: his own recently-published *In Memory of You*, which was 'dedicated to and sung by Miss Gladys Moncrieff',¹³¹ coupled with his own *V For Victory*, written for the Australian Comforts Fund.¹³² In January 1942 he recorded several numbers with Idwal Jenkins at the piano, which included two substantial compositions of his own: *Whalin' Up the Lachlan* and *Lasseter's Last Ride*. In October 1944, again with Idwal Jenkins, Tchaikowsky's *Forsake me never* appears, which is his old Tchaikowsky *To the Forest* in a different translation.

On 12th September, 1945 he recorded a potpourri of settings of the Kipling poem, *Mandalay* by Willebey, Hedgecock, Cobb and Speaks, which appears to have been put together for this recording.¹³³ His penchant for hymns and sacred songs led to a number of record sides in 1945-46, and in December 1946 another Dawson composition *The Bushrangers*, joined several others. A summary of this period by the EMI manager for Australia may be found in an obituary:¹³⁴

I only worked with him in Australia between 1940 and 1951. He was very critical of his own work, was never satisfied with anything but perfection. At that time we used to record on wax not tape. I remember our engineer calling 'we're running out of wax' as Peter kept making one recording after another. You could understand every word he sang. He was a gay and happy soul. He'd probably laugh at the idea of a memorial record.

In September 1945 an income tax saga began, which lasted until Peter Dawson left for England in late 1947. Peter Dawson's Australian accountants were trying to reconcile his Australian and English royalty earnings in order to satisfy the Australian revenue authorities.¹³⁵ When

¹²⁹EMI, 1941, 02.07

¹³⁰EMI, 1941, 07.29

¹³¹MS5030, music folio P: Sydney, Chappell, 1941, photo of Gladys Moncrieff on cover.

¹³²*V for Victory* pub Chappell, 1941

¹³³one of the manuscripts is marked Haberfield, his Sydney address at the time. This Scena is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

¹³⁴Australian newspaper, 1961, 10.16

¹³⁵EMI, 1945, 09.10; EMI, 1945, 11.03; EMI, 1945, 11.09; EMI, 1945, 11.12; EMI, 1946, 11.28;

Peter Dawson requested particulars of his royalty cheques 'between 30th June 1939 and 30th June 1945', the reply, setting out all amounts and the dates they were credited to Australia, was immediate and precise. Yet Peter Dawson was apparently not satisfied, for his accountants raised some queries. Again the Company replied with details showing total earnings: £2486.16.5.

The matter appeared concluded, but a year later a request for even more detail arrived, indicating that Peter Dawson, through his agent, had been arguing with the Australian Taxation Department. The process for ascertaining royalties for an artist working in several places, or whose recordings were sold at multiple outlets, was to collect the data, ascertain the total income, calculate the royalties, then decide to which authority income tax was payable. Taxation in say, India, was paid before the Company received any income; in England and Australia the artist received the gross royalty and had to pay tax in where the assessable income was earned.

The problem for Peter Dawson was a fear of double-taxation: taxation on his gross amount by both the English and Australian taxation authorities. Fortunately - and possibly the explanation for the delay in paying the Australian tax - a double taxation treaty between the two countries was to come into effect in June 1946. EMI again detailed every payment, reconciling the amounts from 1938 to the letter of 28th November, 1946, in summary:¹³⁶

	<u>Earnings</u>	<u>Eng Earnings included</u>
Account No.1	£1989.18.00	£1460.18.11
Account No.2	624.07.11	298.18.06
Account No.3	<u>400.00.00</u>	<u>217.04.08</u>
	£2904.13.09	£1977.02.02
bal on Adv outstanding	<u>109.12.02</u>	
	<u>£3014.05.11</u>	
<u>being:</u>		
advances	750.00.00	
goods	12.02.01	
payments	<u>2252.03.10</u>	
	<u>£ 3014.05.11</u>	

The sum still did not satisfy Peter Dawson, who persuaded the Australian branch to write to Hayes yet again, using the excuse that he needed the information to obtain a taxation clearance to leave the country. The respondent¹³⁷ could not understand why Peter Dawson should be troubling the local branch, as the figures had been sent; and explained to the Australian recipient that no matter what strategy Peter Dawson might adopt, he 'will be liable for tax on his English earnings'.

When Peter Dawson arrived in England at the end of August he was immediately the subject of newspaper interviews,¹³⁸ which centred on his

EMI, 1947, 03.21

¹³⁶EMI, 1946, 11.28: 'as customary total earnings reported to Eng Tax dept'; three pages of detail also separate *English Earnings*

¹³⁷EMI, 1947, 03.21

¹³⁸newspaper interviews all 1947, 08.26

forthcoming tour of the provinces: taxation was not mentioned. But HM Inspector of Taxes was aware of his presence: by the time Peter Dawson returned to England he had accumulated £2277.5.10¹³⁹ in English earnings plus interest, on which taxation was due. No mention was made until he used it to justified a return tour in March 1950:¹⁴⁰

"I am financially par or even minus. Income Tax, my dear fellow. I left England in 1937. Spent the intervening years in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere singing to the troops. Got back here in '47 to be greeted on landing with: 'You owe £1,665 in income tax. Pay, or ...'. I got it paid. Then at home - my home, which is in Australia - income tax, roughly about the same as in Britain, had mounted up."

When the war ended Peter Dawson received an invitation to return to England which was too enticing to ignore and gave him the chance to renew his association with The Gramophone Company. The period 1939-1947 in Australia turned out to be an interim period which had only held his direct association with the English company in abeyance. So a fourth period of obligation to the Gramophone Company can be identified, but it was at best a tentative recapitulation based on the aura of the past with its only future in nostalgia sales. Unintentionally, this last, spasmodic association prolonged the Peter Dawson recording legend to its mythical length.

In April 1947 the Company became aware that Peter Dawson was to return to England in September for a concert tour;¹⁴¹ with the habit of a lifetime Peter Dawson himself had also 'asked us to make further records with him'. It was in the power of the Company to honour the past, which it did - after checking that he was 'still capable making good commercial records'.¹⁴² The Company was pleased to offer him a contract for one year with the option of another, with a guarantee of six record sides per annum at the usual 5% royalty.¹⁴³

The bonds created by long working friendships are strong. Fred Gaisberg was now a consultant with the firm and still in an influential position. 'An idea of Fred Gaisberg's activities can be gleaned from some of the entries in his diary during the late summer and autumn' - which included a meeting with his old friend:¹⁴⁴

30th August.	Recording Peter Pears & B.Britten 2 o'clock.
9th September.	6 O'clock. Michelangeli tests
15th September.	Peter Dawson 6 o'clock.
20th September.	11 o'clock A. Rubenstein

¹³⁹EMI, 1946, 11.28 + EMI, 1947, 12.05 = £1977.2.2 + £300.3.8 (now = £2277.3 x 16.673 = \$A38000). Taxation Department had charged interest in previous court case.

¹⁴⁰London newspaper, 1950, 03.26: *Peter Dawson Is 'Broke'*

¹⁴¹EMI, 1947, 04.15

¹⁴²EMI, 1947, 07.04; 07.08

¹⁴³EMI 1947, 09. 15: original offer six titles per annum become six record sides in the contract. 5% royalty calculated on the English selling price after deducting 15% to cover records returned and/or damaged in transit and/or used for demonstration or advertising purposes, i.e. 5% on 85%

¹⁴⁴Moore, J., 1977

22nd September.	Maggie Teyte 5.30 - 4 titles
14th October.	Cortot
14th November.	Gigli recording 6.30

The recordings were minted in late October/early November and the following January. The selections are typically 'Peter Dawson', either his own compositions or ones written for him. The McCall/Barron *Fretfoot* recorded in 1936 was repeated; his 1942 *Whalin' up the Lachlan* was repeated; a new Pat Thayer number,¹⁴⁵ *Walk down the Road*, in the style of the same composer's, *I travel the Road*, which Peter Dawson had made famous in the thirties; and *Gentleman Jim*, 'especially written for and dedicated to Peter Dawson, 1947', with an impressive long, low G at the end of the second verse.

Drake, The Smuggler's Song, By the Side of the Road and *Snowbird* were old favourites, and the 1935 publication, *Wandering the King's Highway*, an Englishman's *Waltzing Matilda* without the ghostly ending.¹⁴⁶ On the reverse was *The Dreamer*, 'quite the opposite with fine organ accompaniment', from the old master, Herbert Dawson. *The Dreamer* was another Peter Dawson which dated originally from 1928.¹⁴⁷ Now it was recorded and Brian Rust was pleased to write¹⁴⁸ that 'he remains top of the tree for sheer ease, fluency and perfection of diction'. But, although the complimentary review was published in England, the prudent Company had restricted the records to the small-quantity Australian 'E' series only.

When Peter Dawson and Nan were due to set out for Australia again on the *Orcades* on 14 December 1948 the Company decided to honour Peter Dawson by throwing a farewell party for him at the Savoy Hotel.¹⁴⁹ The EMI media had a field day: British Empire's "King Of The Ballad": 'attended by 100 to wish him bon voyage'; 'consistent best seller... HMV... 40 years'; '250,000 miles travelled'; 'more than 3500 songs recorded'; 'presentation latest H.M.V. electrical reproducer'. And none other than Fred Gaisberg himself wrote a paean to a friend he had always admired in the January edition of *The Voice*.¹⁵⁰

It must have been a most satisfying moment for Peter Dawson and his wife. Memories of the luncheon there with Mark Hambourg in 1931, a receptive audience, an old record played, a modern version in comparison; he sang *The Kerry Dance* and told them all those tall in-house tales again. With the presentation - the 'Model 2000 Reproducer' and an 1898 model¹⁵¹ - a jocular threat from the General Manager that if he did not return within the year,

¹⁴⁵manuscript used MS5030, music folio N

¹⁴⁶MS5030/6/19 O.Brock cartoon of a tramp & dog titled 'I travel the Road'. MS5030/6/10: Peter Dawson copied it as an Australian swagman with a terrier.

¹⁴⁷discussed Chapter 6

¹⁴⁸Walsh, 1961 quotes Brian Rust in *The Gramophone*, 1949, 03.00

¹⁴⁹EMI, 1948, 12.00: media release 'today' but not dated, date not on signed card either, or in January *The Voice* report. Departure date is known from Media release, among others.

¹⁵⁰EMI, 1949, 01.09, *The Voice*. (the source of much detail about Peter Dawson's association with the Gramophone Company.)

¹⁵¹EMI, 1949, 03.17: he left the modern instrument with Tom Noble, but the 'Trade Mark Model Gramophone sent to Australia per s.s. "Port Hobart"; dispatched 31.12.48' In late life he was photographed beside it.

they would come and get him. Sixty-five signatures can be counted on the card: a galaxy of names associated with his life at The Company: the first, the current General Manager, Sir Ernest Fisk, then Fred Gaisberg, the old sound engineer, Alfred Clark, his accompanist, Hubert Greenslade, old colleagues like singer Ann Smith, Tom Noble, and those administration executives whose names crop up on memoranda over the years.

In the battle to keep their share of home entertainment market the record companies continually tried to improve their product. High fidelity, which had seemed impractical in the twenties became a reality when introduced by Decca in 1944. In 1947 a new recording medium, the magnetic tape, developed by the Germans during the War, came into limited commercial use in Europe and America, which forced the production of 'fine thread', more value for money, better quality, microgroove recordings. In February 1949 RCA Victor introduced 7" 45 rpm and Decca first introduced 33^{1/3} rpm 'long playing' records to London on 17th September, 1950.¹⁵² A battle of the speeds raged; sales of 78 rpm declined and tape recording came into general use, not only for the presentation of music but as the new recording medium, superseding the long-standing wax method.

Peter Dawson was back in London at the beginning of 1950, and as usual, EMI had been informed. It decided to carry out one recording session with him 'to find out whether he still has a public',¹⁵³ which resulted in a contract for 'two named titles':¹⁵⁴ on 3 April the sixty-eight year old recorded *The Cry of the Wild Goose* and *That Lucky Old Sun*. The titles may have been suggested by Peter Dawson himself because his copy of *Cry of the Wild Goose* was published in 1949 by J. Albert of Sydney, and it is marked: *Professional Copy; recorded HMV B9913*.¹⁵⁵ 'The public' the Company was trying to reach seems to have been the new generation, because these were two modern ballads, light in style, closely related to the dross he sang in the late thirties; songs more suitable for the current crop of stalwart crooners, as opposed to the whisperers or shouters. The enthusiasm of *The Gramophone* critic, 'sounding as young as the best of them', is rather an indication of that author's predilection for the old-fashioned singing style than a compliment to Peter Dawson.

But that would have been irrelevant to the aging singer, who still had faith in the abilities which had kept him ahead of his colleagues for a lifetime. He still had the will and the power to persuade agencies that a Peter Dawson recording was a worthwhile investment, because Homebush produced several more, among them *Song of Liberty* with the Eastern Command Band in January and in September Henry Krips' *Land of Mine*, with the composer conducting the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and chorus in 1951.

In January 1955 Peter Dawson advised an old contact at Hayes that he was back in London and suggested they meet for luncheon.¹⁵⁶ Instead Peter

¹⁵²*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 193; Gelatt, 1977; Moore, J., 1977.

¹⁵³EMI, 1950, 02.15

¹⁵⁴EMI, 1950, 04.04

¹⁵⁵MS5030, music folio C.

¹⁵⁶EMI, 1955, 01.19

Dawson's letter set in train an invitation to introduce his new wife and to celebrate his 73rd birthday (31 January) at Hayes. The goodwill generated flowed on to another recording of two titles: Arlen's *Clancy of the Overflow* and his own curious arrangement, *Mandalay Scena*, recorded for Australia in 1945. At Peter Dawson's request the young Australian conductor Charles Mackerras was employed for the take. Originally the recording was planned with the BBC Concert Orchestra, which held the orchestration.¹⁵⁷ However, the BBC orchestra was not available, so the London Symphony Orchestra was engaged from 2.15 - 5.15pm on Wednesday 4 May at Abbey Road.¹⁵⁸ This was to be Peter Dawson's last recording for The Gramophone Company. It was released as an 'E.P.45rpm version',¹⁵⁹ one of the first, in February 1956, when he was 74. This was vintage Peter Dawson material and a good way to close the last chapter of his recording life. It was reviewed by another veteran critic,¹⁶⁰ who selected it as one of the six most outstanding records of the year, in fact, he thought that it was 'one of the most remarkable of all time'. Although the gramophone industry was enjoying 'another boom period', the Peter Dawson style belonged to an era which was a memory for a few, forgotten by most:

when I think of the days when 'Floral Dance' was a best seller and now this Xmas a pseudo-religious number 'Mary's Boy Child' put over by a 'pop' singer sells 600,000 by the end of November, one realises how times have changed¹⁶¹

During his lifetime he hoped vainly that his records would be reissued:

P.R.S. now scouring the world for Artists Royalties & promise good results. H.M.V. 13^{1/2} million of my records have been sold & are still selling - no re-issues made - only for damned Yanks. Many people complain and naturally enquire - "Where is our Peter Dawson?"¹⁶²

Nevertheless, he continued to receive enough royalties to live comfortably.¹⁶³ These also reverted to his second wife, Constance, although the stream practically dried once the only avenue for sales were reissues by World Record Club.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷BBC, 1955, 04.15. No programme information available but it would appear that Peter Dawson had sung it for the BBC if they held the orchestration. Possibly in one of the 1950 broadcasts.

¹⁵⁸EMI, 1955, 04.07

¹⁵⁹Fassnidge, 1957, 01.21:- 'It seems a long time since I met you at the Boulistin [spelling?] Restaurant and you sang your old favourite "Mandalay" for us all.'- got copy of E.P.45rpm version backed by "Clancy" for Xmas. was 'monoaural' see Chislett below

¹⁶⁰Walsh, 1961 quoting W.A. Chislett, *The Gramophone*, March 1956 : '*Mandalay Scena* was recorded binaurally and heard by visitors to the Radio Show last year'

¹⁶¹Fassnidge, 1957, 12.19 of Phonographic Performance Society [PPS], which collected artists' royalties.

¹⁶²Dawson, 1961, 03.10 to Tierney

¹⁶³Pay-in slips 1954-1958: indicate an income from various source of £A3000-4000, p.a of which c.£1700 appear to be royalties. [mediant £3500 x mediant factor 11.000 = now \$A38500]

¹⁶⁴EMI, 1962, 10.09: royalties assigned to Constance after 1961; EMI, 1963, 01.15: royalties halved to 2.5% when sold to World Record Club. for Constance Dawson royalties see EMI

The recording industry markets a product which must be heard so the performer must attract the attention of the listener; to do so consistently for a lifetime is a singular achievement. Although it can be demonstrated that Peter Dawson was successful in other areas of the entertainment industry, his fame stemmed basically from that industry which had embraced him because he could serve it well. This industry had been the first to capitalise on aggressive sales promotion in England and, as Peter Dawson had graduated from that industry, self-promotion became ingrained into his character. Despite his grounding in serious and religious music, and the constraints of strict colonial Presbyterianism, it was in his nature to respond quickly to every type of music. He understood instinctively how to sing it so that it would appeal to his listeners. Appearance was irrelevant; it was the persuasive power of Peter Dawson's vocal histrionics, a vocal quality with universal appeal which made him one of the Gramophone Company's top recording artists until the mid nineteen-thirties. With such a constant demand for his services, his technique could have become hackneyed, yet there is no suggestion that it ever did. From the critics reception of his recordings it can be said that he never lost that superior quality which singled him out from his contemporaries.

But tastes change. The expectation of each generation is different. It was his good fortune to join a nascent industry which prolonged inherited vocal fashions, fashions which could have died without it. The industry spawned composers who could produce works in variants of the old-fashioned style, while American music began to infiltrate Peter Dawson's earliest repertoire and became more and more dominant after World War 1. The winds of a new capitalistic ethos, with no affinity for the English past, had blown in from America. In the twenties the livelier Charleston and jazz, in the thirties more musicals and film music attracted a younger generation, disillusioned by war, subtly loosing its roots in Empire. The Depression completely ruined the pattern of the past; a new future was needed, safe from the fear of economic disaster. It dictated new trends. These became apparent in the recording industry, where EMI had turned away from Peter Dawson's style of material in favour of modern trends which did not suit him. By the mid-thirties, the 'Peter Dawson' repertoire had lost its place in the market.

That Peter Dawson was the Company's flagship baritone for many years is true. That this was coupled with goodwill and respect for his achievements is also evident, and that it was in both the Company's interest and his own to promote this image of longevity, continuity and popularity is manifest. The Company promoted him and he promoted both the Company and himself.

However, the Gramophone Company contracts alone indicate that the legend and the reality were vastly different. In the early years he was far from committed to this one company. After the skirmishing of the first two and a half years as 'the bottom line in their stock quartet',¹⁶⁵ continuous contracts with this company actually existed only between 1907-1916 and 1919-1937, that is, 27 years. From 1937-39 his contracts were savagely reduced

addendum

¹⁶⁵EMI, 1926, 02.00, *The Voice*,

to fewer and fewer limited-number-of-title contracts.

The financial evidence indicates that from the advent of electrical recording he never filled the Company's sales projections. From 1937 there is something pathetic about the struggle of the 55-year old to remain centre-stage in a sycophantic industry, which kept him prisoner with a few morsels. He was so used to being in demand for recording that he was prepared to sing any old rubbish to continue. He could never admit what the pragmatic Gramophone Company had accepted in 1934: that the day of the English ballad and with it, the person who personified the ballad, had passed.

His tenacity is evidenced by the number of times he initiated dialogue with the Company, even after what appeared to be a sudden and categorical rejection by the industry that had grown up around him. The recording legend exists: it is an exaggeration of the facts by the Company, and by an artist who understood the advertising benefits of banner headlines. Being in demand for concert tours and broadcasting may have been some compensation. Yet there appears to have been the same latent paranoia which affects every artist who lives from one engagement to the next, although he never admitted feeling deserted and ignored in his final years.¹⁶⁶

Oppressed by years, the Human Organ grows
Less pleasing - as the Primo Uomo shows
The gramophone escapes our common curse.
Bad to begin with, it becomes no worse.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶Dawson, 1961, 03.10 to Tierney

¹⁶⁷with apologies to Hilaire Belloc, *Epigramophones* December 1929, in *The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 52 -in original 'Prima Donna'.

Chapter 4

concerts and tours¹

I've always been a rover,
Summer and Winter too,
Wandering the wide world over
Tramping my whole life through ...²

A professional concert is an entrepreneurial activity. It is designed to attract an audience, which will pay enough to cover all the organiser's costs - including payment of the artists - and allow a percentage profit. The successful entrepreneur must exercise sound commercial judgement, not act on sentiment. An entrepreneur uses whatever subterfuge is necessary to attract an audience. This titillation leads to a general atmosphere of hyperbole. An established artist, one proven to produce a successful financial outcome, is favoured in preference to the novice. The professional longevity of an artist indicates an ability to satisfy the criteria of both impresario and audience.

Because self-promotion and publicity material pertaining to an event always present artists in the most favourable light, facts are often exaggerated or distorted, which makes it difficult to define accurately what an artist actually did, what an artist achieved. The life of a concert singer is by its nature unpredictable, erratic, and insecure. There are no continuous contracts. One high profile concert may be a good status symbol, but, unless it generates plenty of the more plebeian engagements, the artist will not survive economically.

Peter Dawson was more fortunate than many other artists. From circa 1904 to 1934 recording provided a reliable core activity, but was it the substance? From the size and variety of his recorded repertoire Peter Dawson must have spent far more time in the studio than the obligatory 'at least two days a month' of his contracts, but even adding his promotional activities for The Gramophone Company and his work for other record producers, there still remained a great deal of time available for other professional commitments.

In later life Peter Dawson reflected that he had only spent about a third of his life in the recording studio.³ Although recording may have made him famous:⁴

He became a great favourite with British audiences who heard him singing

¹some concerts or tours better discussed in relation to Broadcasting in Australia see Chapter 5: Broadcasting- ABC

²Beginning of *Wandering the King's Highway*, one of his most famous popular ballads in later years.[MS5030, music folio N: published Chappell, London, 1935]

³newspaper, 1939, 05.29; London newspaper, 1955,08.26 'His triumphs were won in oratorio, on the concert platform and, for twenty-five years or more, at the microphone.'

⁴newspaper, 1955, 08.26, *A Mighty Man of Song*: reiterated many times in surprisingly similar wording; an earlier example: EMI 1920, 11.00 *The Voice*: 'apart from [recording] Peter has long been a favourite at the "Proms", the ballad concerts at Queen's Hall and the Albert Hall and the leading choral societies all over the kingdom'

with the Royal Choral Society, at the Promenade Concerts and in recitals in all the famous concert-halls. He sang German lieder superbly, but the common touch was his as well, and the man-in-the-street took to his heart the virile singer who was equally at home with "The Floral Dance", "My Old Shako" and a hundred other rousing ballads (many of which he composed himself).

When he sang *Messiah* in Adelaide in 1950 he remarked that 'he had sung it every Christmas, sometimes four or five times in a season' since he had sung it 'for the first time in Adelaide Town Hall under the baton of the late C. J. Stevens',⁵ fifty years earlier.

While a student he had sung at concerts during his stay in Glasgow.⁶ In his autobiography⁷ he claims that his first professional appearance was at a church in Burnett Road, Stepney where he sang the bass songs: *I Fear No Foe*, *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*, *The Bandolero*, and *Long Ago in Alcala*. He then he put his toe in the water with the Albani tour, where he claims to have sung *Hybrias the Cretan* with *Bedouin Love Song* as an encore⁸ in the first half, and *Blow, Blow thou winter wind* and *The Bandolero* in the second half. These claims are suspect as they are all well-known early recordings, some of which were re-recorded later: *Long Ago in Alcala* (Gramophone Company audition, 1904), *The Bandolero* (1905), *Blow, Blow thou winter Wind* (1905), *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep* (re-recorded 1922), *I Fear No Foe* and *Hybrias the Cretan* (re-recorded 1936). Yet whether Peter Dawson's recollections are precise or not, these songs are indicative of the concert repertoire sung by serious non-operatic singers in that period.

Like all young singers at the turn of the century, the rise from obscurity to prominence took time. Young singers trailed through the church concert scene, Musical Societies, and Smoke Nights. Boosey's illustrious concerts were a dream away. Peter Dawson was simply one of any number of artists earning a pittance as they put their foot tentatively on the professional ladder. Although there are few specific programmes available, his concert repertoire would have been that which he had learned in Australia, including oratorios. As there were not enough of this type of concert engagement initially, he was obliged to do his music-hall stint as Hector Grant in the summer of 1906, yet in a surprisingly short time he became recognised as one of the rising stars on the London concert scene.

A feature of the London concert scene were the Ballad and Promenade concerts which were a product of the growth of ballads and similar songs written for use in the home. The antecedents of the ballad are ancient. It

⁵Adelaide newspaper, 1950, 12.05

⁶Adelaide newspaper 1954, 05.27: 'Peter was associated with the Glasgow Abstainers Union, which held concerts in the City Hall on Saturday nights... Non-profit making, its chief aim was to give a counter attraction to the pubs'. AMN, 1954, 05.00, p11: 'There he joined an amateur group which toured the poorer sections of Glasgow giving concerts. "We attempted out biggest musical salvation on Saturday nights," he recalls now. "We went around raking the drunks from pubs and streets, persuading them to come to our concerts."'

⁷as quoted by Walsh, 1961

⁸Vose, 1987, 13, taken from Dawson, 1951, 26

underwent many metamorphoses until it reached the corrupt form associated with the Victorian era.

Bronson⁹ takes 'ballad' from the Latin 'ballare' 'to dance'; he describes it as 'a kind of folk-song known throughout Europe since the Middle Ages, combining elements of narrative, dramatic dialogue and lyric'. So the generic term is very broad. Handed down by tradition, the many verbal and melodic variants have led to latter-day studies.¹⁰ Composers recognised the value of these ballads not only musically but historically for they invariably recalled some real incident. In their spontaneous form ballad texts dealt with 'popular themes, involving both human and supernatural agents in actions now tragic, now adventurous, now comic'.¹¹ Ballads tended to focus on 'a central incident'; 'except in battle-pieces describing hand-to-hand combat, the confrontation is usually between a man and a woman, and it usually consists of dialogue leading to a decisive action'.¹²

This conception of the ballad has an elemental purity akin to folk-song, but, as the industrial revolution compromised the values of a pastoral economy it also compromised the simplistic values of that society. As a new, more affluent middle-class developed during the Victorian era, as industry was able to bring new goods within the financial grasp of this class, one aspect of society to benefit was music for the amateur. A favourite Victorian evening occupation was to sing around the piano - in the drawing room. Sheet music had become cheaper to produce and more homes could afford pianos:¹³

A house without a piano was barely furnished; no wonder that Smallwood's Piano Tutor sold over three million copies. It was the advent of the upright piano at thirty guineas ... that helped to make every home a concert room ...

so a demand for musically simple, 'romantic' compositions, inoffensive in 'polite'¹⁴ society was needed to satisfy this voracious amateur market.

There is a general perception that a ballad 'tells a story'.¹⁵ Inasmuch as stories come in endless variety, so too does this type of song. By the late Victorian era a 'ballad' could be almost any 'song with sentimental text, usually in moderate or slow tempo'.¹⁶ The Victorian ballad is also referred to by pejoratives like 'sentimental ballad', 'drawing-room ballad', 'royalty ballad', even 'shop-ballad',¹⁷ for ballads were big business. They enjoyed a great commercial success in England and the USA in the latter decades of

⁹Bronson, B., 1980, 'Ballad' in *New Grove*

¹⁰by Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger, Eduard Grieg, Zoltan Kodaly, Bela Bartok for example

¹¹Bronson, B., 1980

¹²*Edward*, one of three old war-horses cited by Bronson, has been analysed.

¹³Marsh, 1959, 11.02, 23-26, *The Price of a Song*:

¹⁴Gammond, 1984, 'Drawing-room ballad' in *New Oxford Companion to Music*

¹⁵Bronson, B., 1980, 'Ballad': 'the ballads of Western tradition, in spite of wide individual diversity of tone and subject, resemble one another in their manner of telling a story.'

¹⁶Randel, D. M. (ed), 1986, 'Ballad', *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*

¹⁷Randel, 1986: 'royalty ballad': Publishers paid large sums, not to the author or composer of the song (who usually only got a small fee) but to the well-known performer who agreed to sing it at every public appearance for a specified period. The singer's name dwarfed the composer's on the garish title page. 'shop-ballad': one promoted by a music shop

the nineteenth century. To target the domestic market, piano accompaniments were simple,¹⁸ the songs were deliberately kept within the range and technical abilities of the amateur performer, and the publishing houses began to run promotional concerts.

The first Ballad Concert was actually given in 1857¹⁹ but the impetus came when the Chappell family's purpose-built St. James Hall was opened on March 25, 1858.²⁰ Using the best singers to heighten demand, the music publisher, Arthur Chappell, produced two series of promotional concerts, referred to as the *Saturday* and *Monday "Pops"*, from 1859 to 1901.²¹ In the latter part of the nineteenth century Boosey & Co also centred its publishing activities on the increasingly popular ballad; to promote sales their London 'Ballad Concerts' were also established at St. James's Hall in 1867.²² William Boosey first became involved in the organisation of these concerts in 1880.²³ In 1894, when Chappell's fortunes temporarily declined, William Boosey was engaged to run their concerts too.²⁴ He ran the Chappell concerts at St James as the 'St. James Hall Ballad Concerts' but moved the Boosey & Co concerts, 'which had been given at St. James for twenty odd years, to the newly constructed Queen's Hall'.²⁵ Two years later the *St. James Hall Ballad Concerts* were also moved to the Queen's Hall.²⁶

The Saturday and Monday "Pops" enjoyed such an immense vogue that Gilbert could lampoon them as a form of punishment for social criminals:²⁷

The Music hall singer attends a series
of masses and fugues and "ops"
by Spohr interwoven
by Bach and Beethoven
at classical Monday Pops.

The Monday "Pops" 'so far as Chappell are concerned' definitely closed down in 1898, but the Saturday "Pops" continued up to the season 1902-1903.²⁸ Nevertheless, aware of the public's changing musical taste, Boosey introduced more light, easily-accessible orchestral repertoire into the comparable *Promenade Concerts*.²⁹ By the time Peter Dawson became

¹⁸see also Gammond, 1984, 576, 'Drawing-room ballad', *New Oxford Companion to Music*.

¹⁹Gammond, 1984, writes 1858. William Boosey, *Fifty Years of Music*, 1931, 15. St. James Hall, in which the Chappell family were the major shareholders, was built at a cost of £70000. Blaikley, D., 'Ballad concerts - Boosey & Chappell' in *New Grove*, 1980: Under Thomas Chappell's management the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts were begun in 1858 at St. James Hall. Thomas's younger brother, Samuel directed these concerts, and many famous artists appeared including Charles Santley, Patti and Clara Schumann ...

²⁰Boosey, 1931, 15

²¹Boosey, 1931, 77

²²Blaikley, D., 'Ballad concerts - Boosey & Chappell' in *New Grove*, 1980

²³Boosey, 1931, 77

²⁴Boosey, 1931, 77; Blaikley, 1980

²⁵Boosey, 1931, 89

²⁶Boosey, 1931, 93: which Chappells 'later acquired'

²⁷*The Mikado*, Gilbert & Sullivan, London 1885. Gilbert took William Boosey to court on a couple of occasions.

²⁸Boosey, 1931, 93

²⁹programme, 1913: Peter Dawson's name appears in a the 19th Prom Concert season in 1913, so, as Promenade Concerts were given annually, they apparently started in 1884. Boosey,

involved - in the first decade of the twentieth century - *Boosey's Ballad Concerts* still flourished and, *The Proms* were still in vogue at the Queen's Hall.

Because he controlled the major London concerts William Boosey was known as 'The Emperor of Bond Street'. His power stemmed from his personal control of all facets of the essentially promotional concerts: the publishing houses owned the major performing venues, commissioned songs, published songs, and used famous singers to sing their material at their concerts. Young hopefuls were not excluded from these promotional concerts. The publishing houses may have had the power to be selective but they also had the foresight to replenish their material and their artists. New generations of composers, authors, and performers like Peter Dawson were given a chance to prove themselves. Peter Dawson apparently started edging into the prestigious concert hierarchy before 1909 as he claims to have sung at the Crystal Palace³⁰ and had been engaged for the Promenade Concerts prior to the 1909 tour.³¹

Before leaving on the tour Peter Dawson made his one and only foray into opera. In the total scheme of his life, it was insignificant. His only operatic stage experience was four performances at Covent Garden as Schwarz in *The Mastersingers*, which was sung in English, with Richter as conductor.³² Because of his subsequent fame, his 'definitive recordings' of popular baritone arias, and the frequent use of operatic arias in his concert programmes, the question of Peter Dawson's absence from the opera stage has been a matter of speculation. As late as 1996 his grand-niece was still an apologist:³³

I can tell you why Uncle Peter did not become involved in opera. He married Nan Noble whose family were producing gramophone [sic] records in London. They persuaded him to make records and give concerts.

According to his autobiography, his first visits to Covent Garden as a student filled him with wild enthusiasm, so it may be assumed that the idea of 'standing centre-stage' must have appealed to him. But once he was actually on the stage, his enthusiasm waned: 'Let me say at once that I was not very impressed with operatic work. It struck me as too much work for too little pay.'³⁴

Schwarz, the Master stocking-maker, is a minor bass role. Schwarz is one of a dozen Masters, who form, in effect, a semi-chorus between the principals

1931, 65, 98-99 Promenade Concerts had completely supplanted Ballad Concerts at the Queen's Hall by 1915

³⁰newspaper, 1926, 11.24: 'used to sing with Santley, Plunkett Greene and others at the Crystal Palace 20 years ago (c.1906), I never liked the hall - too vast'. [(author): but Dawson information not confirmed]

³¹Dawson, 1951, 39.

³²correspondence Covent Garden, 1996, 01.12. Monday 25 January, Tuesday 2 February, Tuesday 9 February and Saturday 13 February, 1909.

³³Bennett, 1991, 05.01 to the author: 'He was my great uncle, my grandmothers brother'

³⁴Dawson, 1951, 19 - 22; Rosenthal, 1983, p.1375, Opera: 'Too much work for too little pay' he is said to have remarked, a pity, as his performances of operatic excerpts clearly show.

and the very large chorus. *Die Meistersinger* is an unusually long opera: four and a half hours without cuts;. The minor-role 'Masters' have substantial longeurs. Also, the 27 year-old Australian in his first operatic role would have been regarded simply as an 'Anfänger'.³⁵ Compared with the major roles, Schwarz would not be 'too much work' but too much time for 'too little pay'.

Peter Dawson never let an opportunity slip to recall that he had made a deliberate choice not to follow the elitist, glamorous path through the opera houses,³⁶ but perhaps he (or the management) simply made the pragmatic assessment of his inappropriateness for starring roles. He was short and his voice was relatively small. While neither was a disability for his budding studio and concert career, he lacked the heroic stature and vocal capacity for roles like Rigoletto or Tonio or Iago in the vastness of an opera house .

1909 was a significant year not only for the abortive incursion into opera, but for his first international tour. Peter Dawson claims that he was blackballed from the London concert scene³⁷ when he offended William Boosey by seeking more confirmation than a gentleman's handshake when asked to 'pencilled in' performance dates for the coming season. While it is difficult to believe that his entire career was dependent at that time on the good graces of one impresario, it does indicate that he believed his professional future lay in concertising, with recording a tenuous side-line. He signed on for the Amy Castles' tour to Australia, which started in August 1909 and finished in February the following year.

The group for the tour consisted of Amy Castles, Peter Dawson, Scottish tenor Anderson Nicol, the Australian pianist Victor Büsser³⁸ and the flautist, Adrian Amato.³⁹ The organisers were the Tait Brothers, who were 'Australia's only recognised Agents, and everything they touch is successful, as they have such smart business tact.'⁴⁰ From his long letter it may be inferred that he and Nan had already planned to visit his family and tour in Australia: 'If they hold me the six months, which by all appearances they are sure to do - on account of my great success - it will mean that we cannot revisit Australia until the year after next.' Peter Dawson had left the *Otway* at Port Adelaide to be greeted by family, Choral Society friends and newspaper reporters, but the first concert of the tour was scheduled for 21 August in Melbourne,⁴¹ with performances following

³⁵common operatic usage, from German, 'beginner' with innuendo of inexperienced; poorly paid and exploited.

³⁶for example Adelaide newspaper, 1933, 01.24: opera at Covent Garden ... did not appeal to him, and he decided to confine himself to concerts and gramophone recordings; newspaper, 1938, 10.24: *The Singing Plumber*: An operatic career did not appeal to him and he decided to confine himself to concerts and gramophone recording.

³⁷Dawson, 1951, 39

³⁸programme, 1909.

³⁹Dawson, 1951, 47

⁴⁰Dawson, hw, 1909, c.09.01, pp.6-8 only (MS5030/1/70-72). It is not clear why these pages have survived. Brownrigg (1996) believes some pages have been suppressed but from similar incomplete handwritten letters c.1946 and 1961, it suggests that Peter Dawson drafted letters before he wrote them.

⁴¹Dawson, hw, 1909, c.09.01

every second or third day. Assuming the party had sailed for at least seven weeks, it must have left London about the middle of June. Peter Dawson's hope that he could 'get back home as we both expect [by] Xmas time' was unrealistic, rather 'you see Nan I will arrive in England next March'⁴² or possibly April, because, as the contract was renewed for a second three months on the same terms, it ran through to February.

So Peter Dawson must have decided to join the tour quite early in 1909, not at the last minute because of a fracas with William Boosey. News of the impending tour was definitely current in London at the beginning of June for a music publisher contacted the Gramophone Company trying to promote a song for Peter Dawson by advising that 'I have also fixed up with Miss Amy Castles for several of my songs; she is going to sing them at every concert'.⁴³ At the same time an extended correspondence expounding the benefits of publicity other than advertisements in programmes was exchanged between the Company and its Australian agent, Hoffnung:⁴⁴ 'local representatives in each town which these artists visit [should] arrange to exhibit in their windows and by means of sandwich men' with boards announcing that records of the artistes could be heard at their shops. This practice, it was explained, would lead to an increase in business as 'in the case of Provincial Concert Tours in this country'.⁴⁵

In his letter, Peter Dawson listed thirty-one towns which the tour was scheduled to visit. Although he writes that 'this is just the towns in Vic^{ia} & N.S.Wales', the list includes a number in Queensland. He adds: 'the outlying towns of S.Australia are to be visited, besides New Zealand & Tasmania & W.Australia', and his autobiography contains extracts from letters written from one end of the country to the other.

In every report on Peter Dawson and Amy Castles the number of towns or number of concerts given are quantified. These range from 'four and a half months touring 72 Australian towns',⁴⁶ '81 concerts many of them in the roughest and most isolated parts of Australia',⁴⁷ '100 concerts - all states - packed houses everywhere',⁴⁸ to:⁴⁹

John Tait in the "Sydney Morning Herald" Sept 29, 1909 said "In the end we anticipate that the tour will embrace upwards of 150 concerts instead of the 60 for which we originally contracted with Miss Castles when the party left England.

The detail is not researched but stems from or is corrupted from either Peter Dawson's or Amy Castles' information. Dr Jeff Brownrigg of the National Film and Sound Archive, who has completed a thorough investigation of the life of Amy Castles,⁵⁰ finds claims of attendances, such

⁴²Dawson, hw, 1909, c.09.01

⁴³EMI 1909, 06.02

⁴⁴EMI, 1909,06.01

⁴⁵indicates that promotional tours were the norm in England

⁴⁶Brisbane(ed),1991,*Entertaining Australia*, 157

⁴⁷Walsh, 1961; McMenamin, 1975, *Phonograph Society of S.A.*

⁴⁸newspaper, 1951, 04.25; newspaper, 1991, 08.23

⁴⁹biography, 1988, Amy Castles, information booklet with CD.

⁵⁰Brownrigg, J., 1996, Amy Castles, unpublished ms; chapter 1909-1910: *Touring Australia*

as '6000 attended the Ballarat concert held in the Colosseum' or '2000 turned away' from Amy Castles' concert in the Exhibition Hall in 1902⁵¹ inordinately exaggerated. Amy Castles, two years older than Peter Dawson, touted as the equivalent of Nellie Melba, 'swept over the Commonwealth like a queen in fairyland', 'became known as *The New Jenny Lind*', 'continent opera claimed her in Germany, Vienna and London'.⁵² Despite these claims, Brownrigg believes that she had a rather inadequate voice; it was not very strong and not reliable musically. Though Peter Dawson does not pass any negative remarks about her, he does not praise her either.⁵³ In his letter to Nan Peter Dawson includes a long list of venues ranging from Victoria to Brisbane to begin the tour: coupled with excerpts from letters in his book, which cover the list and subsequent extensions: Sydney 30 Sept (visiting brother Bill), Brisbane 3 Oct., Gympie to Bundaberg 7 Oct.; 'Adelaide 16 December'; 'Hobart 1st Jan, then back to Victoria',⁵⁴ the tour must have been exceptionally exhausting. particularly under the conditions of the period.

Though Brownrigg, whose perception is that 'the Tait brothers engaged Amy and Peter Dawson to go to places where celebrated singers had not sung before', acknowledges the venues highlighted by Peter Dawson, he is convinced that the tour consisted principally of three sweeps through Victoria: first the major towns, then the minor towns, then the backblocks, which nudged over the NSW border.

Peter Dawson writes of the long train journeys and complains of the dusty journeys in horse-drawn vehicles, the roughness of the roads and the terrain. Photographs show the company in 'the turnout that took us the rounds of the town in grand style' and 'the brake that drove us round the Town at a gallop'.⁵⁵ but 'everywhere they were received with open arms; in the bush townships people rode miles to hear them'.⁵⁶

Considering that the population of Australia was not even five million at the time, there would have been very few large country towns with halls large enough to hold 600 people, let alone 6000, and many of the small towns would have been little more than railway sidings with very small community or church halls.

To finish the quote above:

... for there is scarcely a homestead in the back settlements without a gramophone. Peter Dawson was astonished at the knowledge which the kindly up-country folk displayed of his favourite songs ... Give us "Drinking!" Give us "Shade of the Old Apple Tree!"

with Peter Dawson .

⁵¹biography, 1988, Amy Castles

⁵²biography, 1978, in *1000 Famous Australians*, 1978 (has incorrect date of birth); biography, 1988, Amy Castles CD

⁵³Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.00: 'poor old Amy'. No comment on her work, the reference simply leads into a story about a mishap at the laundry. 'old' gives a wrong impression. They were virtually the same age.

⁵⁴Dawson, 1951, 53-61

⁵⁵photographs, 1909

⁵⁶Walsh, 1961, April reproducing *The Talking Machine News*, February 1911, interview with Peter Dawson.

The central purpose of this 1911 article was to promote the Gramophone and Gramophone Company recordings.⁵⁷ Peter Dawson had only been professionally active for five or six years; talking machines were certainly not yet prevalent; he was promoting them and they were promoting him. Brownrigg advises that in the case of Amy Castles recordings, no more than a dozen were sold during the whole tour.

Buying in on the current status of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts, the Amy Castles biography maintains that the first Adelaide Festival was inaugurated by her company in December 1909⁵⁸ with the first performance in Australia of Gounod's *Gallila*, Rossini's *Stabal Muter*, and *Messiah*, with the Adelaide Choral Society conducted by Charles Stevens. Brownrigg maintains that only *Gallila* was performed - not for the first time.

Understandably, there would have excitement in the small city when Adelaide had a chance to hear its successful son in performances scheduled for September 7, 9, 11.⁵⁹ They could see and hear⁶⁰ Amy Castles sing: *Caro Nome* (Verdi, *Rigoletto*), *Baby Clover* and *The Perfect Way* by Willeby⁶¹ and Tosti's *Goodbye*.⁶² Peter Dawson sang: *I am a Roamer* (Mendelssohn) an unusual song with long series of very low notes (F), notes which are high for a bass (e') connected by leaps that require a form of vocal callisthenics.⁶³ He sang a new ballad, *Young Tom o' Devon*,⁶⁴ and that rip-roaring duet *Excelsior* with Anderson Nicol. This was the basic structure. Every concert programme carried a note that the entrepreneur reserved the right to vary the programme. Not printed, but a feature of all Peter Dawson's concerts, were the encores. Each artist would expect to sing at least one encore of a popular nature. What these were cannot be determined for numbers like *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree*⁶⁵ are not mentioned among the thirty titles which Peter Dawson lists for the series.⁶⁶ Thirteen of these which were very popular and 'have since fallen from favour' include *Sincerity*, *My Old Shako*, Pinsuti's *'Tis I*, and *Rocked in the cradle of the deep*. Among others listed *Little Grey Home in the West* was not published until 1911 and his copy of *Phil the Fluter's Ball* bears the publication date, 1937.⁶⁷

His list does contain solid numbers, which crop up again and again during his career: *It is enough*, *Honour and Arms*, *Why do the nations*, *She alone*

⁵⁷Walsh, 1961, April

⁵⁸biography, 1988, Amy Castles CD, quoting Adelaide newspaper, *The Register* 1909, 12.09, 1909, 12. 22

⁵⁹Dawson, hw, 1909, c.09.01. In his book (52) he writes 7 August

⁶⁰programme, 1909, no specific date, printed in Perth, but held by Adelaide Performing Arts Museum. For the purpose of illustrating the typical repertoire, assumed to be Adelaide.

⁶¹wrote 1st of four settings of Kipling 'Mandalay' which Peter Dawson sang - so must have been a popular composer of ballad-type songs

⁶²Tosti wrote up-market popular songs in a quasi operatic style, similar to neopolitan songs like *O sole mio*

⁶³long out of fashion

⁶⁴MS5030, music folios N, O: published Chappell, London, 1909

⁶⁵chapter 3, and Walsh 1962, March: In December 1906 another Edison Bell version *In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree*, 'the raging hit of the year' - Peter Dawson's 'full, rich, bass voice' and 'birds here and there add much to the charm'. It became a best seller in Australia and New Zealand as well as Great Britain.

⁶⁶Dawson, 1951, 62-63

⁶⁷MS 5030, music folio J: published Prowse, London 1937

. *charmeth my sadness, and the perennial O ruddier than the cherry*. A letter from 'Adelaide, 16.12.09' reads:⁶⁸

At the second concert I sang 'O ruddier than the Cherry'. I took the top 'C', and it brought the audience to its feet! But something happened in the orchestra: I don't know who won, but it was a race between the piccolo and myself.

Peter Dawson could not sing a top C (c''); tenors dream of 'top' Cs;⁶⁹ it should read top G, the conclusion of the song up an octave.⁷⁰

Peter Dawson's listed repertoire contains many solid classical numbers, good Victorian ballads but few from the lighter repertoire, yet he persistently advised interviewers that one Melbourne critic, while admiring his technique in *O ruddier*, complained that he sang too many 'smoking concert songs'.⁷¹ 'From that moment' he wrote, he made a decision to 'better his musical outlook', which led to his performance of lieder at the Wigmore Hall.⁷² The impression is given in his book that he turned to lieder after this tour, but it was not until 1924, after he had made several more visits to Australia and New Zealand. The study of those visits may suggest that his decision to reconsider the depth of his concert repertoire arose from later incidents.

The tour completed, Peter Dawson had served his apprenticeship: in the future he would lead his own companies.

Peter Dawson claims that his was forced to start his international touring because of a misunderstanding with William Boosey, but during the tour he received a letter of reconciliation which contained an invitation 'to be the principal baritone in the Chappell's Ballad Concerts this season. That was in 1910'.⁷³

This is probably the way Peter Dawson remembered it, for William Boosey was pivotal to participation in several prestigious London concerts series. Programme information available pins Peter Dawson down to a Promenade concert, not a Ballad Concert, in September 1913,⁷⁴ after his next tour to Australia. An undated Adelaide article, written after Peter Dawson had 'returned to his native city three times' reports that:⁷⁵

⁶⁸Dawson, 1951, 60

⁶⁹the male top C, usually written in the G clef for ease of reading but actually sounding an octave lower. In some earlier music the G clef has an 8 underneath to signify that the notation was an octave lower. A soprano like Amy Castles could sing a printed top C (c'').

⁷⁰the penultimate note is 'middle' G (g) dropping an octave to the 'low' G. Peter Dawson could sing a 'top' G (g') dropping to the middle g.

⁷¹Sydney newspaper 1991, 08.23: *The enduring Peter Dawson* - Again the reporter has dipped into the autobiography or previous articles.

⁷²Dawson, 1951, 51-52

⁷³Dawson 1951, 40; 64-65. paraphrased by Walsh, 1962

⁷⁴programme, 1913, 09.16, Promenade Concert, Queen's Hall

⁷⁵newspaper, 1914: *Adelaide's Own Star* in *The Register* could mean 1913 or 1914 as he was not in Adelaide three times by 1909

nine or 10 weeks hence, when he returns to the Imperial metropolis, it will be to star at the famous Boosey ballad concert series as "principal baritone." This means the first baritone singer in all the realm - for London is of course the musical Mecca.

Dr. D. H. Marleyn, then conductor of the Langham Choral and Orchestral Society, which performed at the Queen's Hall, recalled the occasion when 'the tyrant of Bond Str., the great Wm. Boosey (who had you on his black list for some prejudiced reason) asked you to cancel the engagement with me ... in return for this he would give you a contract'.⁷⁶ The tenor of the letter, however, suggests that it occurred much later in Peter Dawson's career than 1910, possibly even in the 1920s, when he was well established and had sung in the Proms for several seasons, as he apparently had the responsibility for selecting a new 'Director of the Sydney Conservatorium and Conductor of the Sydney Orchestra',⁷⁷ a task which would only be allotted to a high-profile musician.

All Peter Dawson's early repertoire, including the 1909 tour, is for Bass, not Baritone. A feature of favourite airs like *O ruddier than the cherry* and *She alone charmeth my sadness* were exceptionally low notes.⁷⁸ To be a baritone he needed a reliable upper register and higher notes.⁷⁹ The acquisition of these skills he attributes to the teaching of a 'Russian singing specialist', Professor Kantorez,⁸⁰ who also introduced him to the operatic repertoire after the tour. He claims that his register had been 'Eb to D' but after training with Kantorez his range extended from the low 'Eb to the baritone A', an extraordinary range for any singer. While it is not uncommon for the upper range to develop, it is usually accompanied by some lightening of the vocal colour, and an accompanying change in nomenclature: bass to baritone, baritone to tenor, mezzo to soprano. The overall range remains a little over two octaves, but there is a tendency to lose the fruity lower notes as the higher ones are gained.

However, it has already been noted that Peter Dawson adopted the habit of singing the top G, in *O ruddier than the cherry*, which Scott has also observed on recordings.⁸¹

even in the earliest recordings the high notes up to G are brilliant, easy and secure. Kantorez may have helped him to secure control over them but they

⁷⁶Marleyn, D. H., 1952, 02.20

⁷⁷It raises the question: when was Peter Dawson so highly regarded in Sydney that he would be entrusted with this task? And how reliable is the blame on Boosey? Peter Dawson is not mentioned in Boosey's *Fifty Years of Music*, 1931.

⁷⁸low F and E respectively

⁷⁹ for a full discussion of his voice and the implications of registers see Chapter 6.

⁸⁰Dawson, 1951, 29: also refers to him as Nan's teacher during his absence on the 1909 tour. (author's note): the existence of Kantorez could not be established for this research paper. It would be more satisfactory if it could be established that Kantorez was not a figment of Peter Dawson's fruitful imagination. While there could be a teacher with that as a real name it sounds like a pseudonym appropriate to the profession, a name which implies a continental teacher, who has settled in the metropolis. Every continental teacher was 'Professor'; kantor (German) = precenter, cantor.

⁸¹Scott, 1979, 180-182, *The Record of Singing*

were made possible by resisting the temptation to try and produce a big sound, especially in the passage notes. The registers are correctly equalised and blended, the tone finely focussed and there is not an infirm note throughout his compass.

His baritonal inclination can already be observed in early repertoire choices: *It is enough* (Elijah), *O Star of Eve* (Tannhäuser), and the *Don Giovanni* duet *Give me your hand, dear maiden*,⁸² so Kantorez may merely have given him the confidence he needed to exploit the latent upper register, which then gave him access to a far greater range of repertoire.

Peter Dawson must have been one of the recognised Australian singers in London by 1911, for his name crops up in the preparations for Australia's contribution to the Coronation of King George V. On 29 May he sang at an entertainment devised by the painter, Tom Roberts.⁸³ He sang two Edward German songs, a setting of Kipling's *Kangaroo and Dingo then Rollin' down to Rio*, before a silent history in six tableaux opened with the Spaniards and then the Dutch approaching a figure of Australia, who declined to waken to their touch.

Zonophone advised that 'the most perfect voiced of contemporary Bassos' could be coaxed into the recording studio 'notwithstanding the demands on his time by concert engagements in London and almost every town in the Kingdom'.⁸⁴ In England his stature as a concert artist was growing but he was itching to introduce Nan to his family, show her his country, and to promote her as a singer at his side.

The projected tour of Australasia with Nan did not take place until 1913. From his book⁸⁵ it is not clear when this tour took place, but the coupling of programmes, EMI records and Melbourne concert reviews indicate that they toured Australia in 1913, returned to England for a short time, then returned to Australia again in 1914. They were stranded in Australia at the beginning of World War I, toured Australia and New Zealand 1915-1916 then managed to return to London. They returned to Australia again for the Army episode in 1918, toured immediately after demobilisation, then fitting in a South African tour en route, reached England again by the end of 1919.

To tour once in 1913 is understandable, to tour again so closely seems like carelessness. The tours are in fact so close that biographers mistake them for the continuation of the original, but evidence shows that Peter Dawson and Nan were in London again by October 1913. Advertisement from the Queen's Hall for the Promenade concerts of 1913 indicate that he was to due to appear there on 16, 19 September and 11 October.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, commitments kept him in Australia until at least a *Farewell Concert* in Adelaide on 6 August. If he and Nan and their party were in Adelaide on 6 August they could not be back in London in less than six weeks, probably seven. Even if they left from Port Adelaide the next day, the earliest they

⁸²listed on the tour and/or recorded before 1909.

⁸³McQueen, 1996, *Tom Roberts*, 549

⁸⁴Walsh, 1961, 1912 review. smacks of Gramophone Company blurb

⁸⁵and sources based on it

⁸⁶programme, 1913, 08.06; advertisement, 1913, 09.16, Promenade Concert, Queen's Hall

could arrive in London would be 25 September - seven weeks would be 2 October. If Boosey had expected him for those advertised concert it would have been reasonable grounds for the row! Notwithstanding, the news soon reached Australia that:⁸⁷

Peter Dawson, the Adelaide baritone⁸⁸ returned to England just in time to take up the running at the Promenade Concerts. He received a demonstrative welcome back, and was particularly congratulated by Sir Henry Wood

which seems to indicate that he was in London and did appear in the Proms. By October he was certainly in London, because he drew a cartoon and signed it 'Love from Pete, 11.10.13' in the new autograph book of an eleven-year old girl, Nan's sister, Constance, who was destined one day to become his second wife.

Peter Dawson never toured alone. It was in the nature of 'concerts' that a variety of artists was presented: a combination of singers and instrumentalists, Peter Dawson and a pianist, Peter Dawson and a choir. Peter Dawson as soloist with an orchestra. Rarely did he sing a whole recital programme alone. The reason for a number of artists was to create variety; the same principle as a music hall revue.

It may have been argued that it would be physically tiring for one singer to sing a whole programme, which would last two hours⁸⁹ for the printed programme was extended anyway with generous encores: ⁹⁰

Mr Peter Dawson was plainly out to win the favour of his large audience by a downright and vigorous appeal for popularity ... one item calling for no fewer than three extras,

a pattern which constantly repeated itself. On the New Zealand tour in 1915 Peter Dawson claims to have sung an 'average of 20 songs nightly';⁹¹ in 1931 'in Sydney alone sang no less than 125 different songs at nine concerts';⁹² in Sydney in 1933 forty-five possible 'requests' were printed in the programme.⁹³ As an average song takes about three minutes and operatic and oratorio arias possibly double that, twenty songs would mean that he alone sang for at least an hour. Even if split up over the evening, that would be physically taxing; it would demand vocal staying power, which in turn indicates a healthy technical ability and general good health. A space of at least a day between, as recovery time, was standard, usually no more than three concerts in one week.⁹⁴

⁸⁷AMN, 1913, 11.00, p151

⁸⁸note this covert publicity; paragraph calls him 'baritone' by now

⁸⁹a standard recital programme today would be circa one and a half hours; two three-quarter hour halves.

⁹⁰newspaper, *Argus* (1913-19), 1913, 08.04, final concert in Melbourne 1913, 08, 01

⁹¹AMN, 1915, 04.00, p286

⁹²newspaper, 1931, 10.01 = average 14 songs pro concert, of which 7 or 8 would be listed, 6 or 7 encores.

⁹³programme, 1933, 09.09

⁹⁴common in opera also. operas are rarely performed 'back to back'.

'Rest days' were often used for travelling. Travelling was a feature of tours; on the one hand it was interesting to turn up at a new venue, on the other the repetition could be monotonous. Programmes for a tour would be decided in advance, both for preparation of printing and for publicity. If artists were to appear in one city on several evenings, several pre-planned programmes would be needed. On a long tour, there was the danger that an artist could succumb to boredom; warming up the same programme many times could produce a blasé effect.

'Living out of a suitcase' is not to everyone's liking, but for Peter Dawson, like other the professional singers, it was his lifeline. Arriving at a town, finding the pre-booked accommodation, settling into a new room, sleeping in a different bed, finding a decent place to eat, finding the hall and the dressing room, became a routine. What might be luxurious in a big city, might be cramped and uncomfortable in a small town as the tour moved from custom-built concert hall to community centres or school halls. But the singing was the same. The psychology of a touring group can produce enduring friendships or enduring aversions. Living together in such artificial circumstances can create the most unexpected frictions. An artist needed a particular temperament to cope with those constantly changing circumstances with equanimity.

A visiting artist, particularly the principal soloist, was a centre of interest, fêted at many different gatherings of town dignitaries. The enjoyment of this attention was flattering, but at the same time deliberately exploited for promotional purposes, to the point that, in Peter Dawson's case, it was a significant part of the routine of his life to which he became addicted.

Fortunately, Peter Dawson was a born touring artist; his fame was secured because his love of performing was contagious. This characteristic pervades all reviews. 'If they hold me the six months, which by all appearances they are sure to do - on account of my great success' he boasted to Nan during the first tour.⁹⁵ He learnt much from it. He matured in stature. From 1913 onward he was no longer the apprentice, but the master.

Programmes were divided up among the artists. Although on the 1931 tour he and Mark Hambourg alternated with the opening number, in general Peter Dawson commenced programmes, on the assumption that that would get the evening off to a good start. In these 'souvenir programmes', official numbers to be sung were printed and followed a definite musically hierarchical pattern. The first number was always a serious number demonstrating his vocal strengths: in general, he would start with an aria by Bach, Handel or Purcell or other baroque composer, which he called an 'old Master', sometimes he began with an operatic aria. This opening number would always be followed by an encore in a related 'serious' style. As the evening progressed the quality gradually lightened. A second bracket would include art songs by British or continental composers. Here he could again demonstrate his technical and musical abilities. Encores could now move into the area of well-known recordings on which his popularity rested. A third bracket could actually contain some of these numbers and the next encores were intended to raise the popularity hysteria completely.

⁹⁵Dawson, hw, 1909, 09.01

The *Farewell Concert* in Adelaide in 1913 may serve as an example of a typical programme.⁹⁶ Peter Dawson began with Rossini's cheerful aria *Largo al factotum* from *The Barber of Seville*; item No.5 was 'Air, "When Valiant Ammon" (from the Opera, "Amena") Composed in 1794 by Jonathan Battishill'; No. 9. 'Songs (a) "Within these Hallowed Halls" Mozart', a serious aria for deep basses,⁹⁷ and (b) and (c) the serious art songs *Wild Wishes* (Schrader), and Cowen's *Onaway, Awake, Beloved!*, based on Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. The popular ballads *The Blue Dragoons* and *Young Tom o' Devon* are not listed until No. 13.

At the 'Grand Welcome Concert' in Adelaide the company of 'Peter Dawson, the world-famous basso' consisted of Nan, soprano, under her stage name, Annetta George, a violinist, Eugene Alderman, and a tenor Alexander Cooper.⁹⁸ The programme⁹⁹ pattern may again be observed:

No.1: *Prologue* from *Pagliacci*; No.4: *Why do the nations*; No.6: before the first interval, a duet with Nan: *Still as the night* (Goetz). In the second half, No.8: *The Floral Dance*; No. 11. Ballads: (a) *Little Grey Home in the West*, and (b), another duet, *It was a song you sang me* (Lohr).

The Adelaide correspondent to the *Australian Musical News* had hardly finished expressing enthusiasm for five concerts by Clara Butt and her husband, Kennerley Rumford, when Peter Dawson and his party added to the explosion of culture in 'the Queen City of the South'.¹⁰⁰ As could be expected 'Adelaide turned out in force'. The 'famous basso' was by 'now showing pronounced baritone tendencies'. The *Prologue* was a 'virile and altogether excellent reading [which] demonstrated his fitness for big baritone operatic roles'. 'Why do the nations' was not quite so successful' which is surprising, because to this day Peter Dawson has been held up as the model for the articulation of the complex coloratura of this aria.¹⁰¹ He also sang 'a fine song *The Flea*' (Moussorsky). He sang the printed '*Floral Dance*' and also '*The Blue Dragoons*, *The Admiral's Yarn*, *Sincerity* and other old favourites'. The reviewer adds that 'he has wonderful vocal equipment and sings from E below to A flat above', the latter obviously from Peter Dawson's programme biography.

Nan was described as 'a soprano of light and warm quality. [She] sang Santuzza's song and several songs by Lohr, Del Riego and d'Hardelot accompanied by Arthur Williamson.' Peter Dawson, master of the local situation, sang Williamson's own composition, *Thy Remembrance*. In reviews, attention was securely focussed on Peter Dawson; the other artists merely glossed over. Whether that was entirely due to reviewers' perceptions of his skill vis-à-vis the others or whether Peter Dawson had chosen back-up artists of unequal status in order to emphasise his superiority could be debated.

⁹⁶programme,1913, 08.13

⁹⁷although not from Mozart, basses like to sing the final e as an effect note at the lower octave, E. Very few arias have lower notes.

⁹⁸programme,1913,06.17, Exhibition Hall Adelaide

⁹⁹programme note: 'All vocal number will be sung in English'

¹⁰⁰AMN, 1913, 07.00, p13

¹⁰¹Scott, 1979, 180-82

When Peter Dawson claims that he paid attention to the advice of the Melbourne critic in 1909, it could as well have been any of a number during this 1913 season.¹⁰²

Although there was little or nothing of a strongly emotional nature there was much that was pleasing ... he makes use of all that is comprised in good musicianship but he does not allow this element to obtrude itself unduly. He sings to please, and not to torment. [He] has practically no subtlety and no finesse.

The AMN review of the same concert in the Auditorium ('warmer and more comfortable than Town Hall') appeared in August:¹⁰³

Mr Dawson does not aim at very high game; he knows precisely what he can do; he does it to perfection. If you look for a sound classical programme ... give Mr Peter Dawson a wide berth. But if you want manly "breezy" singing and are not too "pernickety" - he is the man for you.

Again Nan was only mentioned briefly: 'the capable assistance of Miss Anetta George whose "Vissi d'Art" was too fast albeit in her other numbers she showed a pleasing soprano to advantage' and 'a nice clear soprano singer'.¹⁰⁴

Peter Dawson may have asked himself what the critics wanted. He always used classical numbers, great baroque arias, excerpts from oratorio, operatic arias, the finest art songs; they were presented in his programmes with swollen information which proved that he knew who the composer was and the importance of the arias. *The Prologue*, an excellent aria with room for plenty of histrionic subtlety was 'not a heart to heart talk'.¹⁰⁵ In Schubert's complex lied *Der Wanderer* he was 'a healthy sort of wanderer ... a much less despairing figure than Schubert conceived'. Schubert's short but beautiful *an die Musik*, which depends on absolute control of the difficult cantilena, was 'very impressive' as was Rubenstein's more extended but no less difficult, *Der Astra*; yet the only numbers to win communal critical approval were Liza Lehmann's recently published *Cowboy Songs*; they were 'most interesting because most out of the common', 'for even if they were composed in St. John's Wood they have an excellent Wild West flavour'.¹⁰⁶ There was general agreement on the ballads, of course, in particular on Balfe's sentimental *The Arrow and the Song*,¹⁰⁷ a famous setting of Longfellow's 'I shot an arrow in the air', which 'scored a marked success'.

It appears that, despite the careful selection, the programmes provided little out of the ordinary for experienced critics. What Peter Dawson could not

¹⁰²Melbourne newspaper, *Argus* (1913-19), 1913, 07.10 reviewing the concert, 1913, 07.09

¹⁰³AMN, 1913, 08.00, p34-35

¹⁰⁴newspaper, *Argus* (1913-19), 1913, 07.10; 1913, 08.04

¹⁰⁵inserts this paragraph from newspaper, *Argus* (1913-19), 1913, 07.10, AMN, 1913, 08.00, p34-35

¹⁰⁶MS5030, music folio A: *Cowboy Ballads*: 1. *The Rancher's Daughter*; 2. *Night Shepherding Song*; 3. *The Skew-ball Black*, published Chappell, London, 1912.

¹⁰⁷in MS5030, music folio A as a Peter Dawson manuscript.

disguise was his good-natured, superficial approach to singing: his tendency to sing everything well but as if it were a good story. While his enthusiastic audience had come to hear and enjoy the recording star - and went home satisfied with the programme and the encores - the critics tried to draw a line in the sand between what he was and what he purported to be:¹⁰⁸

He can sing you the ordinary ballad - some which he chose were distinctly "ordinary" ... and can come nearer to persuading you they are worth singing despite all your better instincts. A bluff hearty singer, with no aspirations to elevate humanity by his art, with no special thought for any but the most straightforward expression of "emotional significances" and what-not.

In the following January¹⁰⁹ the news was published that he would return with his own company, comprising 'Miss Annetta George, a Welsh tenor and a London entertainer and humorist'; after singing *Elijah* in Adelaide on 23 June they would begin an extensive tour throughout Australia. The projected performance of *Elijah* did take place on Saturday, 27 June, 1914 with Peter Dawson (in capitals), Miss Annetta George, Miss Gladys Cilento, and Furness Williams. As C. J. Stevens had died some three years earlier, Professor J. Matthew Ennis was now conductor of the Adelaide Choral Society and 'full orchestra'.¹¹⁰

Two concerts on 7 and 8 July in the Melbourne Town Hall were not auspicious:¹¹¹ 'The nights were cold and the audiences sparse'. Peter Dawson had 'brought with him a company of uninteresting vocal artists, generally correct in delivery, but cold and unemotional'. The company was in Goulburn on 14 August, when World War 1 broke out, moved on to Wagga next day, then to Albury; 'the tour continued' to Melbourne 'and we played to good houses'.¹¹² The reception in Melbourne this time was similar to the year before; enthusiastic audiences, much of the same repertoire was repeated, and the reviewers comments, although a little kinder on the substantial numbers, aped those of the previous tour. From the first concert, Saturday 19 September:¹¹³ 'while the singer excels in the portrayal of somewhat commonplace passions and perfervid sentiments, as expressed in the popular ballad, he can do finer things as he showed in the treatment of some better stuff *Onaway, Awake Beloved*', and was 'more than ordinarily effective in more solid stuff' - his 'admirable' friend-in-need, *O Ruddier than the cherry*.¹¹⁴ *Why do the nations*: 'specially notable for its stirring emphasis - the words came out like a feeling of indignant protest - and the fine treatment of the difficult roulades', earned its just reward, while many other numbers had an 'unfailing success even when they were on occasion musically of no account'.¹¹⁵ Peter Dawson certainly had this ability to play 'on the feelings of his hearers with serious songs,

¹⁰⁸AMN , 1913, 08.00, p34-35

¹⁰⁹AMN , 1914, 01.00, p217

¹¹⁰programme, 1914, 06.27

¹¹¹AMN , 1914, 08.00, p 48

¹¹²Dawson, 1951, 82-83

¹¹³newspaper, *Argus*, 1914, 09.21

¹¹⁴newspaper, *Argus*, 1914, 09.25

¹¹⁵newspaper, *Argus*, 1914, 09.26

humorous songs, songs of sentiment and songs of description'. His aria encore, *O Star of Eve*, 'was a sample of true bel canto; *Song of the Flea*, a 'somewhat broad bit of humour', 'evoked much merriment' and 'his purely ballad efforts were naturally perfectly done'.¹¹⁶ After every item he 'gave encores without stint'.¹¹⁷

At the last concert a country tour was announced,¹¹⁸ - possibly the one with composer William James as accompanist¹¹⁹ - but the party was back in Melbourne in October, where the litany of praise, modified by criticism of the weight of the programme in favour of the banal, was repeated again. Peter Dawson writes¹²⁰ that disaster struck when the party was in New Zealand in 1915. The news of the horrendous casualties at Gallipoli 'ruined our concert tour'. A letter from Peter Dawson to the Australian Musical News in March 1915 is headed *Peter Dawson in New Zealand - a triumphant tour*.¹²¹ They had sung '45 concerts, six a week'. He wrote:

it is hard to realise that a terrible war is in progress, Everyone seems prosperous and ride about in their motor-cars, attending concerts, theatres and music halls, not forgetting the inevitable picture shows. Money to burn so to speak!

On 25 December 1914 he and Nan had sung *Messiah* in Wellington - packed houses - extra concerts - 50 to go - after which their plans were to leave Adelaide on 11 June, 1915. Calculating from this self-promotional epistle they had just arrived in time for *Messiah* and intended to finish the tour about mid-May, a six-month tour. But they did not leave in June: a *Peter Dawson Popular Farewell Concert* took place in the Sydney Town Hall on 11 December 1915 in aid of the Central Sandbag Committee.¹²²

As many biographies report that 'the music hall impresario H. D. Macintosh' offered Dawson a tour of Australian variety halls and that 'business was excellent and he recouped his concert losses',¹²³ this *Farewell Concert* could be presumed to have happened at the conclusion of the Tivoli contract. However, a review indicates that he was at the Tiv in Melbourne from 1 - 6 April, 1916:¹²⁴

his fine voice soon won over even those patrons who regard song as an unwelcome and unnecessary break in a rapturous succession of knockabout turns. His first song was the hackneyed *Toreador* usually regarded by singers as a "try your lungs" test while not missing one ounce of the dynamic effect ... no less successful in another vein *Mother Macree*, a little

¹¹⁶newspaper, *Argus*, 1914, 09.28

¹¹⁷AMN, 1914, 10.00

¹¹⁸AMN, 1914, 10.00

¹¹⁹newspaper, 1961, 10.16, *The Peter Dawson I Knew*: 'As pianist Mr James toured Victoria with Peter Dawson before WWI; he is not mentioned the year before.

¹²⁰Dawson, 1951, 83

¹²¹AMN, 1915, 04.00, p286

¹²²programme 1915, 12.11: 'Mr Dawson contributes to the Sandbag Fund at least one Sandbag for every ticket sold'

¹²³example from Walsh, 1961, but original source Peter Dawson. 'The Tiv' was the Australian music hall circuit

¹²⁴newspaper, *Argus*, 1916, 04, 03

Irish song which has often been sung but never better...there are many concert singers who are unable to adapt themselves to the demands of the vaudeville stage but Mr Dawson has a free, warm manner which helps even the least musically cultured to like his songs.

Not only could Peter Dawson always find an excuse to sing a concert, he obviously organised concerts well in advance, because every time he turned up in Australia the programmes had been prepared and the project advertised long before he arrived. This means correspondence back and forth for some time, until the information sent and received satisfied both parties. Even after signing up in 1918 he returned to Adelaide for two *Farewell Concerts*¹²⁵ with three other singers - Nan, Ella Caspers, Rosa Walton - 'Joseph Blaschek (Monologue & Sketch)' and 'Hony Lieut, Francis Blake (Pianist & Accompanist)'. Peter Dawson had a spot in each half; his printed items were: (1st programme) No.6. *I am a Roamer*, No.10 *An Old Garden* (Hope Temple); (2nd programme) No.6. *Prologue from Pagliacci*, No.10. *How's My Boy* (Homer). Even after he had joined up he sang *Three farewell concerts to Private Peter Dawson* 'prior to his departure for the Front with the A.I.F.' in the Sydney Town Hall on 11, 12, 13 June, similar conglomerates, which also included Nan.¹²⁶

In his autobiography he claims that after the War he had organised a false invitation to return to London but that next day he received a real offer to perform in Melbourne, after which he had a twenty-week South African tour en route to England.¹²⁷ No sooner had he quit the Army than he was appearing in Melbourne again,¹²⁸ which suggests that the appearance was organised during his period of service, not on impulse. The review mentions *Largo al factotum*, the dramatic *Rigoletto* aria *Pari siamo*, Handel's bubbling *Droop not young lover*, the gentle *Drink to me only with thine eyes*, *To Chloe in sickness* (Sterndale Bennett) and *Full Fathoms Five* (Dunhill). As usual his technique was praised but the arias damned.

When the Gramophone Company announced the 'new and exclusive agreement' beginning 1 December 1919, it reported that Peter Dawson had been entertained by The Savage Club in Melbourne prior to his departure.¹²⁹ In August, 1919 Chappell advertised¹³⁰ that Peter Dawson, 'The Famous Baritone', would feature Hermann Lohr's *Little Grey Home in the West*, and *Away in Athlone* in a 'Melbourne season'. As he is also credited with appearing in Madame Tetrassini's Farewell Concert at the

¹²⁵programme, 1918, 03.30, 04.01: promoter was Tivoli Theatres

¹²⁶Winifred Carter (harp), Gladstone Bell (Cello) W. J. Coad (Violin), Sid Macdonald (Tenor), Montgomery Stuart (Reciter), Accompanist: Lieut Francis Blake

¹²⁷Walsh, 1962, May: 'sent a cablegram to housekeeper in London to invite him back as HMV cable' 'day after cable six week singing engagement in Melbourne at \$425 (£85) per week'; then twelve week South African tour at £75 (pw) -stretched into 20 weeks at an increase of salary. Based on Dawson, 1951, 91

¹²⁸newspaper, *Argus* (1913-19), 1919, 01.27: 'sang finely - he showed all his former beauty of tone coupled with a power of moulding the tone that was little short of remarkable - he makes every word and syllable beautifully musical'

¹²⁹EMI, *The Voice*, 1920, 03.00.

¹³⁰AMN, 1919, 08.00 p52

Albert Hall at the end of 1919,¹³¹ he could not have made a twenty week tour and been on a ship for six to seven weeks if there had been concerts in August. The Savage Club luncheon could have happened during the Tiv season, but the Chappell advertisement represents an intention rather than a fact. On a later occasion, 1939, such an inadvertent advertisement also appeared, when a proposed tour was dropped in favour of a more lucrative project.

At this stage, the overview of named material indicates a strong bias toward serious classical repertoire. Titles which appear most often are the arias: *Largo al factotum*, *Toreador Song*, and *The Prologue*; Handel's *Why do the nations* and *O ruddier than the cherry*; the 'serious' songs *I am a Roamer*, *Onaway*, *Awake Beloved!* and *The Cowboy Songs*, and the ballads *Border Ballad*, *The Blue Dragoons* and *Young Tom o' Devon*. but the tenor of the reports indicates that his public came principally to hear the ballads and other popular music that were not named either in the programmes or by the critics; those given generously as encores.

These peripatetic journeys to Australia may have been dictated by those turbulent times, but would not be made on altruistic grounds. A tour by a small group of artists to such a small population was spread over such a massive continent would be expensive, so the justification would have to be a decent financial return. The complexities of these six years: the travelling, the reaction to his programmes, management of the groups and economic worries, further matured Peter Dawson as a concert artist.

Despite negative reviews, Peter Dawson persisted in his enthusiasm for operatic arias. Settled in England after World War 1 he joined a group of recording associates, 'Rosina Buckman, Maurice d'Oisley, Edna Thornton and William James, the Australian pianist' who performed operatic arias. Peter Dawson advises that they toured for three months through England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales - to a mixed reception: 'a dozen excerpts ... has the annoying defects of a stump orator whose stories have neither beginning nor end'; 'one is at a loss to understand why a concert of this nature should be more popular than ... more natural songs'.¹³²

His lack of true empathy for arias may have been attributable to his lack of practical operatic stage experience; he could only present these songs as he understood them - from the English text. Despite the mixed repertoire he was called on to record, at this stage of his career he appears to have tried constantly to improve the quality of his concert repertoire. Singing in English was intended to make works in foreign languages available to an English public. But by achieving this objective, it may be argued that the true character of the original was destroyed. A composition, such as a German lied or a French art song or an Italian aria, is dependent for its colour on the metamorphosis of the poem or libretto into sound. The cumulative sound of words and music is the song. If the words are translated or paraphrased this combination is destroyed and the song

¹³¹Dawson, 1951, 92: first appearance after the War, and EMI, *The Voice*, 1920, 11.00: Tetrzzini concert last season.

¹³²Dawson, 1951, 94 [Rosina Buckman was also an Australian]

virtually no longer exists.

As there are so many compositions in foreign languages which the professional singer would like to sing, there is no short way of overcoming the barrier: the language must be studied, not phonetically, but in depth, to the point where nuances are intuitive. It is an unfortunate trait of English-speaking singers that they are born to a language so universally used that they comfortably isolate themselves from other languages and lack the incentive to adventure into them. Continental artists, educated from childhood to tackle the language of their neighbours, have a distinct advantage.

The Englishman will argue that if the language cannot be understood, the song cannot be appreciated. But singing a song is not reciting a poem. To the true musician sound and the inflection of sound can convey the true meaning. Peter Dawson would disagree. With his fame, with the myriad interviews, came a multitude of opportunities to voice opinions, which consistently confirmed conservative clichés. He was always ready to play the pontiff, and what better subject than 'singing in English'. *British songs for Britain* was his motto:¹³³

many scholarly musicians will disagree when I say that in England songs should be sung in English - an Englishman likes to understand the words of a song - I have sung in German and Italian but am unhappy when I know that nine-tenths of my audience has no idea what I am singing about!

Peter Dawson correctly attributes his success to his consistent use of English; a signal characteristic of his excellent technique was the clarity of the words. 'Our habit of singing opera in every language but our own is extraordinary', he said. His programmes certainly feature British composers like 'John Ireland, Arnold Bax, Armstrong Gibbs, Thomas Dunhill', who wrote 'music cameos, not so much to tell a story as paint a picture'.¹³⁴ His argument held good for songs written in English, but when he sang songs like Schumann's *Two Grenadiers* or Schubert's *Erl King* in English, they sounded like just two more English songs, instead of great works of art.

It may have been Peter Dawson's intoxication with Kipling's poems of the Raj which led him to conceive the idea of the 1921 tour to India, Ceylon, Burma and the Straits Settlements.¹³⁵ Although it was announced in both *The Voice*¹³⁶ and the *Australian Musical News*,¹³⁷ the only extended record of the tour is his own report which does not deal with repertoire at all but rather with the discomforts of those hot countries and the unpleasant

¹³³ newspaper, 1927, 06.17, repeated verbatim in *AMN*, 1933, 05.00, 10-11

¹³⁴ they, like other English composers, including Landon Ronald, Bantock, Elgar, were good composers, but no longer fashionable today. The reason for their lack of popularity is not clear.

¹³⁵ Dawson, 1951, 99ff. The Straits Settlements, a British Crown Colony as distinct from the Federated Malay States under British protection, comprised Singapore, Malacca, and Penang.

¹³⁶ *EMI*, 1920, 03.00: 'constant globe-trotter' - 'India, Ceylon, Straits Settlements and Burma'

¹³⁷ *AMN*, 1921, 09.00, 45, notes from Ceylon: 'full season of music April to July', 'has given eight recitals in Ceylon'

snobbishness of the English civil servants, who were his main contacts. An album of small, slighted faded sepia photos show various members of the party - himself, Nan, 'Dorothy Freseder (Pianist), Winifrid Small (Fiddler)'¹³⁸ - all dressed very pukka, in various places in India. Most are undated - 'on the way down to Kalka from Simla' - but in one a poster on the 'Palace Theatre Gateway' advertises '*Wraggle T[aggle]*, Wednesday 16 March, at 10 pm'; and one photo dated 15 May: 'The Great Banyan Tree, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sibpur, nr Calcutta'. The only Botanical Gardens mentioned in the book are the 'world famous' Royal Botanical Gardens near Kandy, where the milder climate came as a relief.¹³⁹ He retained an affection for Colombo, claiming that he sang there on every journey to and from Australia.

Apart from burgeoning anecdotes, the advantage of the tour may have been a more intimate knowledge of the route where the 'Burma gal' would have been 'a-setting', for Peter Dawson now had first-hand knowledge of the heat and sweat of the jungles, and a healthy aversion to malarial mosquitoes, bats and myriad other insects. Although the party appears to have come no further than Penang, in later life the story of the exotic journey was extended to China and Japan.¹⁴⁰

To indicate that there was a constant demand for his services, Peter Dawson had begun the life-long habit of presaging his next tour even in 1913.¹⁴¹ In India he announced 'a world tour' 'in a year's time', which would include 'India, Ceylon, the Far East, Java'.¹⁴² In 1939 he planned 'to retire next year after making a world tour',¹⁴³ in 1947 'going to Holland',¹⁴⁴ in 1949 'New Zealand, Canada and England' then 'visit South Africa'.¹⁴⁵ In fact, few of his forecasts came true. His last visit to South Africa was in 1935; thereafter he was restricted to England, Australia and New Zealand. Sometimes the truth escaped: he had never toured 'out of the British Commonwealth', 'not to the USA or the Continent' because:¹⁴⁶

"The English countryside was so beautiful and the opportunities were so numerous that I never had any desire to go away from the lands where I knew the language and the people".

Although he spent lengthier periods based predominantly in London or in Sydney, he never stopped touring. The principle of concerts never changed nor did the essential character of a tour; only ingredients like impresarios,

¹³⁸photograph, 1921, hw. 'Freseder' not clear

¹³⁹Dawson, 1951, 109

¹⁴⁰newspaper, n.d., MS5030/15/box 6/folder 24: 'I've toured Australia and New Zealand seven times, South Africa three and I've also sing in India, Burmah, the Straits Settlements, and China and Japan.' There is no evidence that he was ever in China or Japan. MS5030/15/Box 6/folder 24, Ron Hughes, PDAS doubts that he ever got there.

¹⁴¹AMN, 1913, 09.00 83: returning next year with a special company [to] assist the local Choral Society in an oratorio festival which will include *The Messiah* and *Elijah*

¹⁴²AMN, 1921, 09.00, p45

¹⁴³Adelaide newspaper, 1939, 05.24

¹⁴⁴Colombo newspaper, 1947, 08.05

¹⁴⁵Sydney newspaper, 1949, 02.05

¹⁴⁶Sydney newspaper, 1951, 04.25

personnel, repertoire or mode of travel varied.

As advertisements for the 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1926 seasons show¹⁴⁷ he was actively involved in *Promenade Concerts* at The Queen's Hall under Sir Henry Wood, the conductor whose name is indelibly associated with this series.¹⁴⁸ Such news, of course, was relayed to Australia as '*Australians at Famous Concerts*'.¹⁴⁹ Eleven Australians or New Zealanders are listed including Malcolm McEachern, Florence Austral and Peter Dawson. Austral and Dawson even appeared together on the popular 'Last night', Saturday, 18 October 1924.

The nature of the Peter Dawson's 'turn' can be extrapolated from reviews:¹⁵⁰ he was praised for his set number, the aria, *Largo al factotum*, which was followed by an encore: Mozart's *When your days of philandering are over*. If the audience was particularly enthusiastic, another encore, of a lighter nature, might be added: on one such occasion 'Mr Dawson's admirers were enthusiastic and would not let him go until, after repeated encores, he sang the *Floral Dance*'.¹⁵¹

Conductors do not always pander to the egos of their soloists: to them, performing is a job. Apart from their own egos, which have produced a type of brutal drive to their position of power, conductors are more concerned with the large body of instrumentalists which they have to control during a complex and extended programme. So it is not entirely surprising to read that the 'mercurial' Henry Wood 'had a strange brusque way of quashing artists'.¹⁵² Peter Dawson captured Wood's fiery nature, as he saw it, in his cartoon, *Sir Henry Wood conducting "Fire Music"*. The complex drawing shows an agitated Wood conducting violins, cello, horn, harp, saxophones, a double bass, a row of devilish trombones, an organ at the back with fire instead of a seat, flowers at front of the stage, a monkey with a shanghai and a scary devil figure prancing around.

Largo al factotum or *When your days of philandering are over* may be ebullient, comic music, but they were arias and therefore acceptable 'serious music'. Despite the evidence of *The Floral Dance*, Peter Dawson has been at pains in his book to illustrate that he was not engaged to sing ballads - as one of his much-quoted anecdotes underlines. On one occasion, when the audience demanded an encore, Peter Dawson sang his own, *Boots*, and was damned by Sir Henry for singing such rubbish. Peter Dawson responded by accusing Wood of a *faux pas* for not admiring Kipling.¹⁵³ Its a good yarn, but had there been any altercation it would have been at a rehearsal, otherwise the orchestra would not have prepared the music for the performance.

Also indicative of his standing as a serious concert artist in that era is and appearance in *Messiah* at the Queen's Hall with the Alexander Palace

¹⁴⁷programme, 1923, 24, 25, 26, from Vose, 1987, 123-5

¹⁴⁸The Proms still extant today

¹⁴⁹AMN, 1924, 10.00, p24

¹⁵⁰as example: London newspaper, 1925, 08.10

¹⁵¹London newspaper, n.d. but Sir Henry Wood conducting. 'repeated encores' suggests a 'Last Night' when the conductor panders to the audience.

¹⁵²Dawson, 1951, 67

¹⁵³Dawson, 1951, 68 [his composition, *Boots*, is based on Kipling's poem]

Choir¹⁵⁴ and another advertisement for a concert at the Royal Albert Hall.¹⁵⁵ In that forthcoming concert the artists were practically all Australians: the principal singer¹⁵⁶ was Madame Lily Payling 'The Famous Australian Dramatic Soprano', who was supported by Peter Dawson 'The World-Famous Australian Baritone', Lauri Kennedy 'The Celebrated Australian 'Cellist'¹⁵⁷ - and 'England's Greatest Lady Pianist', Adela Verne. Two of the accompanists were Herbert Dawson (Piano), who features on many Peter Dawson records as organist, and L. Stanton Jeffries (Organ), whose name appears with Peter Dawson in the first radio broadcast to Australia and in later British Broadcasting Commission correspondence.

Although his touring during this period continued to take him all over the British Isles, he expresses a particular sympathy for Ireland by devoting a chapter of his book to 'My Irish Tours'¹⁵⁸ - as if they were international events. Ireland had become a thorn in the side of England through the rise of the political party for independence, Sinn Fein¹⁵⁹, (Gaelic for 'ourselves'), between 1905-1908.¹⁶⁰ The modern IRA was re-established when the Irish Brotherhood, which considered itself the government of the Irish Republic, took over the Irish Volunteers for the Easter Rising of 1916.¹⁶¹ Following the first Dail Eireann in January 1919 the Volunteers were recognised as the Army of the Irish Republic and in 'this capacity they prosecuted the War of Independence 1919-1921.'

The IRA 'could not hope to win a war against Britain by the gun alone': but, in association with Sinn Fein, it made 'British administration of Ireland impossible'. As a result a truce was called in July 1921 and a peace treaty signed. One of those who had fought at the General Post Office during the Easter Rising of 1916 was William Cosgrave (1880-1965). His sentence of death for his part in the Rising was commuted to life imprisonment, but he was released in December 1916. He became the Treasurer of Sinn Fein and an Alderman. From 1922-1932 he became President of the Provisional Government.

Far from bringing peace the treaty with Britain caused a split in the IRA. Some, the New IRA or Irregulars, took arms against the Provisional Government and fought a civil war until 1923, when Eamon de Valera and Frank Aiken agreed to surrender; but not before a number of die-hard extremists had been arrested in September 1922 and executed in December.

¹⁵⁴newspaper, n.d. but 1920s assumed from performance venue: 'The contralto and bass soloists, Miss Margaret Balfour and Mr Peter Dawson were on a higher level than the soprano and tenor'

¹⁵⁵advertisement, 1923, 04.14.

¹⁵⁶in the largest print. concert named 'The Payling Concert'

¹⁵⁷Lauri Kennedy was one of Australia's best cellists. so was his son, and currently his grandson enjoys world-wide acclaim as a violinist

¹⁵⁸Dawson, 1951, 110 ff

¹⁵⁹information on Sinn Fein and IRA from Hickey & Doherty, 1980, *Irish History since 1800*; Doherty & Hickey, 1989; *A Chronology of Irish History*; R.F.Foster, 1988, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*.

¹⁶⁰Doherty, 538: The Sinn Fein League was founded in 1907 from a merger of the Dungannon Clubs and Cumman na nGaedheal. In September 1908, the Sinn Fein League merged with the National Council to become Sinn Fein.

¹⁶¹Doherty, 265

The IRA disassociated itself from Sinn Fein, when de Valera proposed a constitutional role for Sinn Fein in 1925. In 1932 de Valera became the next President and Frank Aiken, as his Minister of Defence, released outlawed members of the IRA imprisoned by Cosgrave.

These dates provide a clue to two of Peter Dawson's tours. The antagonistic mood toward England did not affect him when he toured for he was a professional entertainer, an opportunist not a politician. Following one concert in Dublin he was photographed with 'President Cosgrave' of the 'Irish Free State' after lunching with him and his family:¹⁶²

"I have sung," said Mr Dawson, "before many audiences but in that home at Templemore where I sang one little song at the special request of Mr. Cosgrave, I think I met one of the most pleasing in the President, his wife and two children "

The concert must have been between 1923 and 1932, but before the 1931 tour; probably in the mid- to late twenties, when the effects of the Civil War had worn off.

On another occasion he took part in a requiem concert for IRA martyrs, which suggests during de Valera's time, probably after the 1933 tour. Peter Dawson referred to this concert particularly in his memoirs and retained the paste-up of the programme.¹⁶³ Having sung more than his fair share of encores, he intended to signal the end of the programme with the playing of *God Save the King* but, to avoid any provocation, the sensitive accompanist, Hubert Barth from the Carl Rosa Opera Company, merely closed the piano and bowed.

The heading of the programme itself gives an inkling of the tenseness of the evening: 'In Memory of Richard Barret, Joseph McKelvey, Liam Mellows, Roderick O'Connor, IRA members executed in Mountjoy Prison 1923', and it contains extracts from prisoners' letters including the last letter from Liam Mellows, dated 8 December 1922. Peter Dawson sang in 'Part I, No.5' *Largo al factotum*, in 'Part III, No.2' *The Smugglers Song* (MacFadyen) and *Invictus* (Huhn) and in 'Part III, No 6' *The Spirit Flower* (Tipton). None of the songs was particularly appropriate to the occasion, although there could have been more specifically Irish songs among the many encores to which he refers.

When Clara Butt sought advice on her repertoire for her forth-coming Australian tour, Nellie Melba is reputed to have said: "Give 'em muck!"¹⁶⁴ This patronising attitude was not shared by Peter Dawson, a fact which worried most reviewers and some colleagues, who had stereotyped him by his encores rather than the evident substance of his programmes. Finally Peter Dawson felt the pressure; felt his status warranted an overt demonstration of better musical taste.

In one version of this decision Peter Dawson claims that the Canadian

¹⁶²EMI, 1929, 06.00, *The Voice*:

¹⁶³Dawson, 1951, 111-112. Dawson, 1929, programme stuck together, MS5030/4/12. not dated.

¹⁶⁴a rule of thumb she did not ignore herself. She was not above singing *Old Kentucky Home* (Giasberg/PD anecdote) and is known for the definitive recording of *Home, Sweet Home*, which she had often sung on her tour prior to the Castle 1909 tour (ref Brownrigg)

singer Dixon Ryder had said 'it was about time I did something worthy of my voice', so he studied with this mentor for three years before giving four recitals of German lieder at the Wigmore Hall and another four at the Aeolian Hall.¹⁶⁵ From his autobiography¹⁶⁶ it appears that his friend Dixon Ryder was not in London but was 'at that time chorus master at the Met'. Only the first recital series is mentioned, which Peter Dawson organised because Ryder had asked him to try out a young Canadian accompanist. 'The first real chance Gerald Moore had of showing his remarkable ability' was when 'I gave him the chance to accompanying me at three recitals I was to give at the Wigmore Hall of German lieder and a number of French and English classical songs'.

Moore's own biography indicates that he came to London circa 1919, and that his first collaboration with Peter Dawson was a recording, after Peter Dawson had recommended him to The Gramophone Company. They made a 'concert tour through the British Isles' about 1921, during which they 'became good friends and he engaged me on every possible occasion'.¹⁶⁷ Peter Dawson's exploration of continental repertoire occurred in three recitals at the Wigmore Hall in May, 1924 and at another three at the Aeolian Hall in October, 1928.¹⁶⁸

Moore wrote: 'professionally he startled everyone by stepping out of the channel where he was distinguished by giving three recitals, each of a different programme'.¹⁶⁹ The first programme, 9 May 1924:¹⁷⁰

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| I | | |
| (a) <i>Sei mir gegrusst</i> [sic] | | Schubert |
| (b) <i>Erstarrung</i> | | |
| (c) <i>Wasserfluth</i> | | |
| (d) <i>Die Krahe</i> [sic] | | |
| (d) <i>Ungeduld</i> | | |
| II | | |
| (a) <i>Die Mainacht</i> | | Brahms |
| (b) <i>Botschaft</i> | | |
| (c) <i>Standchen</i> [sic] | | |
| (d) <i>Der Tod, das ist die Kühle Nacht</i> | | |
| (e) <i>Blinde Kuh</i> | | |
| III | | |
| (a) <i>Nun wandre Maria</i> | | Wolf |
| (b) <i>Verschwiegene Liebe</i> | | |
| (c) <i>Fruhlingnacht</i> [sic] | | Schumann |
| (d) <i>Du bist so jung</i> | | Eric Wolff |
| (e) <i>Traum durch die Dämmerung</i> [sic] | | Strauss |
| IV | | |
| (a) <i>Down by the Sally Gardens</i> | | Herbert Hughes |
| (b) <i>Must I go bound</i> | | " |

¹⁶⁵Walsh's version, 1962, January, from Meadmore, 1935, *Gramophone* interview with Peter Dawson.

¹⁶⁶Dawson, 1951, 191

¹⁶⁷Moore, G., 1962, 38.

¹⁶⁸London newspapers (*Daily Express* and *Daily Sketch*), 1928, 10.29: newspaper London: 'Mr Peter Dawson, the popular singer, who is giving a series of three recitals, starting tomorrow at the Aeolian Hall, New Bond Street.

¹⁶⁹Moore, G., hw, 1961

¹⁷⁰programme, 1924, 05.09. Printed correctly in Dawson, 1951, 95-96

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| (c) <i>White in the Moon</i> | Arthur Somervell |
| (d) <i>The Last Revel</i> | Julius Harrison |
| (e) <i>In Prison</i> | " |
| (f) Four Elizabethan Lyrics set to music by | Roger Quilter |
| (i) <i>Weep ye no more</i> | |
| (ii) <i>My Life's Delight</i> | |
| (iii) <i>Damask Rose</i> | |
| (iv) <i>The Faithless Shepherdess</i> | |

The repertoire available from this programme may have been repeated three times, because only these songs appear in his later concert and broadcasting repertoire. The repertoire was indeed a departure from the norm if Peter Dawson is epitomised by the light-hearted *Bells of the Sea*, recorded on Zonophone in that month, but at the same time he also recorded his only aria in German, *Jokanaan is summoned before Salome*, a dramatic adventure in modern opera. In 1928 the parallel recordings were as diverse as *Ol' Man River* and a group of ballads accompanied by Gerald Moore, including Bantock's *Captain Harry Morgan*.

The German songs are chosen at random, presumably because their contrasting styles suited the programme and Peter Dawson's technique. They range from relatively impulsive songs, (*Sei mir gegrüßt*), lyrical songs with beautiful cantilena (*Verschwiegene Liebe, Traum durch die Dämmerung*), to the delicately humorous *Ständchen*. The discriminating beauty of *Die Mainacht* with its exalted, extended E^b climaxes, obviously fulfilled all he expected from a great song for it appears in many later programmes. Each number is a gem in its own right although songs from *Die Winterreise* (Schubert b, c, d) out of context lose some of their impact.

Reports suggest that Peter Dawson enjoyed a capacity for pronouncing not only dialect but foreign languages faithfully although omission of the German *umlaut* (¨) in the programme suggests that neither he nor Moore were so intimate with the language at that time that it disturbed them. Because of the diverse repertoire which he sang, the importance of this addition to his repertoire may be underestimated: Peter Dawson tends to brush it off himself by shifting the punch-line from the quality of the songs, which would be too esoteric for most of his audiences, to 'it was very nice but when I added up the accounts for the three concerts I found I was 90 quid out of pocket', and diverts the topic to the importance of singing in English: 'so I decided there and then that what my mates had been telling me was right. People want me to sing in English.'¹⁷¹

That serious composers regarded Peter Dawson as a serious singer may be concluded from an approach by Bantock's publishers, who regarded him as their entrée to the Gramophone industry. They were authorised by 'Professor Granville Bantock' to pay him royalties 'in consideration of your making and obtaining publication of Gramophone Records of any of the following of his songs: *Ozymandias, A widow bird sate mourning, Summum Bonum, Captain Harry Morgan*'.¹⁷² Bantock's music was

¹⁷¹from Dawson but here from newspaper, 1956, 07.07, *Last song of Peter Dawson*, newspaper 1991, 08.23, *The enduring Peter Dawson*

¹⁷²Bantock, 1928, 06.09. *Captain Harry Morgan* see programme above; also EMI recordings

contemporary and obscure; only *Captain Harry Morgan*, which nears the piratical ballad genre, has an immediate impact.

Both his association with composers and his method of introducing his songs to his audience, may be observed from his presentation of Arthur Somervell's setting of Tennyson's *Maud*, a cycle of twelve songs, which was featured on his 1931 tour, but from correspondence, was prepared for the Aeolian Hall recitals beginning 30 October, 1928. Somervell wrote to Peter Dawson: 'Here is a précis of *Maud* which I am told (& I think I agree!) is rather good. Will there be time to get it printed for Tuesday?'¹⁷³

Originally written in 1898, it has the same formula as the *Lucia di Lammermoor* story: daughter and handsome but unwelcome neighbour fall in love; discovered at forbidden tryst by brother; brother killed in a duel; protagonist flees: in this case, he goes mad instead of the girl. This was grist to Peter Dawson's mill. The music is redolent of late Victoriana; quality music but saccharine sentiment.

The extant music¹⁷⁴ gives an insight into the care with which Peter Dawson prepared his programme. The pages of music have been sewn together; text which Peter Dawson, would have spoken is typed and pasted in where appropriate; the introductory remarks: ' "*Maud*" or "*The Madness*" may be likened to a little "*Hamlet*" with only the Prince speaking. The principal actor is "*Lancelot*" who is *Maud's* lover.' The first number, *I hate the dreadful madness*, follows. The dialogue continues before No.2:

A vast speculation had failed which had left him [Lancelot] flacid [sic] and drained. *Maud's* father - lord of the broad estates, and the Hall, was responsible for his financial ruin. Lancelot's mother died of a broken heart. *Maud's* mother died abroad and away from him who had ceased to share her heart. *Maud* had one brother of ill repute; he was seldom at home. Her father spent most of his time in London, and so, *Maud* was free to wander at will. Lancelot had often seen her in the village, and admired her great beauty. She was tall and stately, and although as children, they had played together, they had never spoken since the feud. One day he heard her singing: *A voice by the Cedar tree*.

'3. A new mood comes over him. Can such a world be so bad when a voice can sing so beautiful (sic). He is converted to love. *She came to the village church*; 4. no dialogue. *O let the solid ground*, 'straight on'; 5. *Birds in the high Hall-garden* 'straight on'; 6. *Go not happy day* 'straight on'.' The method continues: the fight, Lancelot is locked up in a madhouse, *Maud* dies, and 'finally this song shows him sane but shattered, *My life has crept so long* "finish up quickly".

The cycle is rarely done nowadays, but some of the numbers, *Come into the garden Maud*, *Birds in the High Hall-garden* and *Go not happy day* may occasionally surface.

Peter Dawson left the *bon voyage* luncheon at the Savoy, which celebrated his twenty-five years service to the recording industry, because he 'was obliged to rush off to the Palladium, where he [was] singing to crowded and

¹⁷³Somervell, 1928, 10.25

¹⁷⁴MS5030, music folio C

enthusiastic audiences'.¹⁷⁵ The Palladium had long been the acme of the music-hall circuit; a far cry from the Queen's Hall and the Wigmore Hall. Since his early Hector Grant days Peter Dawson had avoided this branch of the entertainment industry, but his brother-in-law/manager could see advantages in broadening his popularity base - and earning good money. When Peter Dawson 'arrived in London from a tour' in 1930, Tom Noble had made the arrangements: the programme and a fee of '£250'¹⁷⁶ per week' were sorted out over lunch at the fashionable 'Frascati's'¹⁷⁷ in Oxford Street.¹⁷⁸

The characteristic of the music hall was hardly that of the elevated concert halls, nor was the audience analogous. In true music-hall fashion, items as diverse as jugglers, comedians, performing elephants and Peter Dawson were programmed together. He relates¹⁷⁹ that on his first entrance the blinding spotlights prevented him from seeing his audience in the darkened auditorium, behind a smoke haze, star-dotted with the red ends of lighted cigars and cigarettes. When the orchestra played his entry to *Largo al factotum* he absent-mindedly started to sing in Italian but saved the occasion by switching quickly to English. The impression is given that the 1931 engagement was the first, but the BBC had already broadcast a programme in December 1930.

The repertoire that day, 19 March, 1931 was broadcast directly from the Palladium:¹⁸⁰

Don Juan's Serenade
A Banjo Song
I travel the road
Journey's End

Tschaikowsky
 Homer
 Pat Thayer¹⁸¹
 Hero da Rance arr Hewitt

Although he had demonstrated his capacity to be effective with 'serious' material on the Tiv circuit during the War, it is a mark of his ability to enthrall any audience that he dared sing the Tschaikowsky or anything like it at the Palladium. As the latter three are in popularist vein the numbers give the impression of being his second bracket; he would probably have begun the first with a popular aria.

The development of his Wigmore and Aeolian Hall repertoire was felt on the Australasian tour of 1931, which was arguably the most successful artistically - and financially of all his tours.¹⁸² Partnered by Mark

¹⁷⁵EMI, 1931, 04.00. newspaper, 1931, 03.20: 'A plumber, whose voice has brought enjoyment to millions, gave three performances at the Palladium yesterday'

¹⁷⁶1996= £3200 pw

¹⁷⁷Dawson, 1951, 174.

¹⁷⁸menu, 1931, 03.27, Restaurant Frascati Oxford St W.: Bon Voyage & Safe Return Nan & Peter 1931, Friday 27th March (hw on reverse among others): 'A great evening full of most charming episodes. Oh for another such in November. Palladium Pete'.

¹⁷⁹Dawson, 1951, 175

¹⁸⁰BBC, 1931, 03.19, National 9.58, BBC Dance Orchestra, Peter Dawson (Songs) (from the Palladium)

¹⁸¹Dawson, 1951, 158, claims he made the song famous when he sang it as an encore on the fourth evening at the Palladium

¹⁸²Australian newspaper, 1951, 04.25 (interview): '1931, when, in spite of depressed times,

Hambourg, a pianist of equivalent musical stature and popularity, they appear to have shared a self-confident rapport, which spilled off the stage into their personal lives, making it a memorable tour. In March the forthcoming 'joint Australian tour' was being advertised, to begin in Brisbane on 16 May.¹⁸³ Mark Hambourg, 51, 'Russian born child prodigy', who had married 'Dorothea Mackenzie, daughter of Lord Muir Mackenzie'¹⁸⁴ was 'presently touring Europe' while Peter Dawson was 'touring England'. To allow them to commence in Brisbane as scheduled, the ship must have departed about the beginning of April.¹⁸⁵ From various sources, the tour took them to Sydney by 2 June, then on to Melbourne in June, back to Sydney in July, across to New Zealand in July back to Melbourne in August, over to Tasmania in September, then on to Adelaide and finally ending in Perth on 31 October.¹⁸⁶

Publicity - to which Peter Dawson was a partner - modestly refers to him as 'the world's most popular singer', who has made 'more than 3000 different gramophone records, the greatest number ever sung by one artist'; sales were 'computed' at ten million.¹⁸⁷ To catch the imagination of the audience, not only was 'his magnificent voice' praised but his 'wonderful charm of manner, breezy as the plains of his native Australia' and his 'extraordinary gift of anecdote'. And status? Even royalty was invoked: he was 'a great favourite with the Prince of Wales and the Duke and Duchess of York' who have, 'personally complimented the famous baritone upon his wonderful singing'¹⁸⁸. Impresario Larsen knew his craft: no purveyor of patent medicines could find more stops on the publicity organ.

Photographs of Peter Dawson and Mark Hambourg, who was lauded in similar vein, indicate clearly that they were treated like today's pop stars, albeit more soberly. In Brisbane they were photographed with the aviator, Charles Kingsford-Smith, and Larsen.¹⁸⁹ In New Zealand they were photographed with their wives and Lord and Lady Bledisloe at Government House.¹⁹⁰ In Adelaide Peter Dawson, especially, was a constant source of news. Newspapers covered a visit to his old school,¹⁹¹ a meeting of the Savage Club,¹⁹² and a dinner in the Town Hall by the Commonwealth

the pair averaged £400 houses in 60 concerts in Australia and New Zealand'; Australian newspaper, 1991, 08.23: 'Tours with Mark Hambourg including 1931 ... despite depression grossed \$50000'

¹⁸³AMN, 1931, 03.00, 17-18

¹⁸⁴also in advertising flyers, e.g. advertisement, 1931, 09.26, Perth.

¹⁸⁵see menu, 1931, 03.27, Frascati above

¹⁸⁶AMN, 1931, 03.00, Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.01, Sydney newspaper, 1931, 04.25, among others

¹⁸⁷AMN, 1931, 04.00, 7; AMN, 1931, 05.00, 10-11

¹⁸⁸advertisement, 1931, 09.26, Perth

¹⁸⁹photograph, 1931, 05.16c: 2 copies; one with autographs of each person.

¹⁹⁰photograph, 1931, 07.07 (Nan is not in this photo); postcard, Bledisloe, 1931, 07.08 to Peter Dawson at Hotel George, Wellington.

¹⁹¹newspaper, 1931, 09.26

¹⁹²photograph, 1931, 09.26c. PD makes a number of visits to this and other Savage Clubs during his lifetime. He was entertained by the Savage Club in 1919 (EMI, *The Voice*, 1920, 03.00, op. cit) but did not become a member in London until 21 March, 1929. Savage Club to PDAS, 1985, 05.11: 'Peter Dawson became a Savage on 21.3.1929, proposed by Mark Hambourg, seconded by the hon. Sec. & G.L.Skampe, the artist'. London Encyclopedia, 1983:

Club.¹⁹³

Any interview took on the air of a social occasion. Reporters were fascinated by the 'raconteur':¹⁹⁴ 'he holds the floor when he gets going. There is an enthusiasm about him that is infectious'. In this light-hearted way he could actually brag that he had sung a mammoth numbers of songs, had sung them all from memory - as if that were a singular achievement instead of the norm - had never sung better, and then skited about his impeccable preparation. The same technique of this 'modest' man can be observed in any interview.¹⁹⁵

The ability of both Peter Dawson and Mark Hambourg to capitalise on the ambassadorial aspects of the tour is epitomised by a dinner held in their honour by *The Good Companions Society*¹⁹⁶ in Adelaide that season. Many of the participants were old friends of Peter Dawson; names like the singer Fred Williamson or the cartoonist Kerwin Maegraith crop up from time to time during his lifetime; the rest were men of substance intent on enjoying a social occasion. The atmosphere, taste and humour of the times may be extrapolated from the four panels of the amusing menu.¹⁹⁷ The first panel showed the formal programme of 'toasts' for the evening, each followed by a musical item. The toasts begin with *His Majesty the King*, then a toast to each of the guests, several more, like *South Australia*, and finally *Auld Lang Syne*, when all would stand and hold hands in a circle. The second and third panels, dedicated to the guests, are headed with Maegraith caricatures of each artist and a doggerel identification.¹⁹⁸ The fourth panel, the menu, is titled *The Joyful Journey*: each course has a related name related to driving a car, such as *Sparking Plugs*: Oyster Cocktails; *Engine Feed*: Roast Turkey and Ham; *Scenery*: Cauliflower, Green Peas, Boiled and Baked Potatoes, Asparagus au Beurre.

If there is a disturbing feeling of charlatanism it is endemic to the industry, for their artistic achievements were unequivocal. The air of a triumphal march implied by the dinner and publicity was realised on the concert platform. Review after review praised them both. Each had a comfortable empathy with the audience; Peter Dawson's coupled with a discreetly

Savage Club: 9 Fitzmaurice Place, Berkeley Square, W.1. Founded 1857 ... in 1975 moved to their present home in the Lansdowne Club ... gregarious club, to which many actors, writers and lawyers have belonged. (Author's note: I have been advised that the Savage Club in Adelaide was a social club for professional men. At meetings there was a guest speaker. Members were called 'Savages'; at Ladies Nights the women were referred to as 'Lubras'.)

¹⁹³newspaper, 1931, 09.22

¹⁹⁴Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.01

¹⁹⁵for example, newspaper 1951, 04.25

¹⁹⁶Peter Dawson subscribed to many clubs: Savage Club, Primrose League, RSL Rose Bay; was a Freemason (release papers) a Rover Scout (film) and newspaper, 1933, 04.28: 'world patron of The Good Companions Society'.

¹⁹⁷menu, 1931: the framed menu with 29 signatures - not the total number of persons named as present - could be seen on the 1st Floor, ABC building, Collinswood, Adelaide, 1991,

¹⁹⁸ Here's to Peter Dawson, We drink to Mark Hambourg,
Back in Adelaide, his home. Pianoforte lord;
To every fine function In the hearts of good fellows
Our Peter lends "tone." He strikes the right chord.

We thank "The Bulletin" for permission to use caricatures of our guests

impeccable vocal technique and musicianship, which placated the severest critic, for he applied it as carefully to a banal ballad as to the most demanding art song. There was no more carping now about the balance between 'serious' and 'popular', in fact, such was his charisma that he could even present numbers like *Largo al factotum* or 'Arnold Bax's expressive *Land of Exile* in which singer and accompanist shared equal honours' among the final encores.¹⁹⁹

Most of Peter Dawson's recorded music would have been dictated by The Gramophone Company, so the structure of the concert programmes, which he dictated himself, give a clearer indication of his personal conception of music. Much of the concert repertoire also appears on record, which may indicate that the Company felt there was a market for that repertoire and had suggested it to him, but it may also indicate the Company's willingness to respond to his suggestions. Advertisements for recordings in the programmes indicate clearly that there was collusion between the artist and the recording company to promote sales.

For this tour there were four basic programmes. The formula was always the same, gradually moving from the most 'serious' to the final 'light' numbers. Peter Dawson's first number would be an 'Old Master' or 'Operatic Aria'. The second bracket would usually be serious 'Songs', generally English or foreign art songs, although these could include an aria, if it was not in the first bracket. The third bracket, also 'Songs', would again consist of 'art-songs' but now tending towards those of a lighter musical quality, including his own compositions. As usual, encores were sung after each bracket; the most substantial number being at the end of the programme to pander to gramophone enthusiasts.

A synthesis of the four standard programmes demonstrates not only his personal preferences but the material acceptable to a concert audience in 1931.²⁰⁰ For the first bracket he chose the most demanding songs: the recitative, *Ah shall not this great day of wrath*, followed by the 'Air', *Thou most Blest, All quickening Day* from the Bach 'cantata *Wachet, betet* (1716)'; *O ruddier than the cherry*; Beethoven's extended ballad-style song, *Adelaide*, and 'Operatic Excerpts: Prologue to "Pagliacci" Leoncavallo'. With such a number of songs to his credit it could be expected that the programmes for various tours would vary considerably; on the contrary: he knew his own abilities, knew his audiences and stuck to what had proven successful. Certainly he added and expended material: *Adelaide* was only used on this tour but the other three songs, though widely different in style, soldiered on stalwartly through many campaigns.

¹⁹⁹Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.04

²⁰⁰programme, 1931: four published programmes from Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Perth, many also named in reviews. *An Eighth Programme 1931 Australasian Tour*, (programme, 1931), handwritten by Peter Dawson, consisting of three groups of 'songs' has not been taken into account because there is no comment on these songs in reviews to hand. As the programme does not contain an 'opening number', it looks more like a BBC broadcast or an Aeolian Hall recital. Some of the numbers are from the 1924 recital, other from a mss c.1926. An 8th programme indicates that a 5th, 6th, 7th are missing. Reviews indicate that he gave more than four concerts at some venues: e.g. Sydney, Perth, but, as this 8th programme bears no specific performance date, it is possible that it is one of at least eight initial drafts from which the substantive programmes were developed.

The second bracket, the 'serious' songs, were Somervell's *Maud* cycle; *Die Mainacht* (Brahms), *Marins d'Islande* (Foudrian), *Rann of Exile* (Bax), and the dramatic Scottish ballad, *Edward*, set by the German composer, Loewe;²⁰¹ *Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen* (Brahms), *Promenade à mule* (Foudrian), *The Traveller* (Godard), *Wood Magic* '(9th cent.)' (Martin Shaw); another group begins with *Vision Fugitive*, a superb aria from Massenet's *Hérodiade*, followed by lighter numbers: *Blinde Kuh* and *O liebliche Wangen* (Brahms), and *Lights Out* (Ivor Gurney).

The third group maintained the serious quality with the accent essentially on English composers. One group included *House of Mine* (Stewart) and *A Sea Gypsy* (Michael Head). Others were: *The Fairy Lough* (Stanford), *The Donkey* (Besley), and *Kangaroo and Dingo* (German);²⁰² a random collection of Shakespeare Songs - an implication of significance - *Come Away Death* (Arne), *Autolycus Song* (Greenhill), *Crabbed Age & Youth* (Parry) and *Hey, Ho the Wind and the Rain* (Walthew). Arne is usually 'Dr. Arne', often followed by his dates, for Peter Dawson's programmes have the irritating habit of suggesting that a piece of music was 'important', possibly to educate the public, although the suspicion arises that it was intended to indicate that Peter Dawson was a singer of superior quality.

Among these 'English songs' were two foreign songs, sung in English. They were such effective numbers that he was obviously keen to include them. From their character they could have fitted more appropriately in the second grouping, rather than at the lighter end of the programme. One was Moussorgsky's *Song of the Flea* '(from Goethe's Faust)', which had been made famous by the giant Russian bass, Chaliapin. It is a blatantly comic song. Goethe breathes vulgarity through the mouth of Mephistopheles to shy at the stupidity of the late eighteenth century court, of which he was a senior functionary. Fleas, favoured by the Kaiser, wreck havoc among the courtiers, who cannot afford to respond naturally for fear of offending the King. The song concludes in favour of 'we peasants', who can squash the fleas with pleasure and impunity, and laugh at the folly of the court. The humour lies not only in the singer's vocal and physical reaction to the mounting musical itch, but the raucous, ribald laughter *ad libitum* at the climax.

Many of the continental art songs can be recognised from the Wigmore Hall recitals; others, like *Maud*, from the Aeolian Hall. Profiting from those experiences Peter Dawson was 'proving quite a linguist, not only in the French and German songs, but in "Edward", too, where his Scottish accent was that of a native'.²⁰³

Asked in 1951 about his attitude to songs, he replied that if he found a good song, he would sing it until all the other baritones had 'discovered' it too, then it was time to stop.²⁰⁴ The example he used was *Edward*. He had first it heard sung in 1912 and had then sung 'all over the place, including Scotland'. Stuck in his music²⁰⁵ is a long article about Sir Walter Scott's

²⁰¹printed as *Leowe*. in a number of programmes - and subsequent reviews.

²⁰²already noted in 1911 Coronation year

²⁰³newspaper, 1931, 06.20, *Music in Australia*, p10

²⁰⁴Australian newspaper, 1951, 04.25

²⁰⁵newspaper, 1922, 09.08

Edward, the Scottish nobleman, who reluctantly revealed that the blood on his sword was the blood of his father, whom he had just murdered at his mother's insistence. Revolted by his deed, Edward flees his beloved family, his inheritance and his country and, in going, curses his mother for her foul counsel. The song, in Scottish dialect, is quasi strophic. Needled by his mother, Edward uses a variety of reasons to explain the blood, concluding each with an agonised 'Oh!' Each phase of the abomination is musically related but with growing intensity, until finally Edward shrieks his guilt and thunders out his curse, with a concluding, desperate 'Oh!'. It is a dramatic song requiring substantial vocal stamina: just the vehicle for Peter Dawson to use all his skills, including his family accent.

The other continental song in the group with *The Flea*, Schubert's *The Erl King*,²⁰⁶ stood alone. For Peter Dawson, *The Erl King* was the vocally histrionic equivalent of *Edward*. Although referred to as a *lied*,²⁰⁷ *The Erl King* is an excellent ballad. As in *Edward* a dramatic story is told, in which Peter Dawson could don the make-up of several contrasting characters. *The Erl King* also moves through various musical planes of intensity. The music allows the singer to portray four different persons, each with a different voice; again grist for Peter Dawson. Over Schubert's 'galloping' accompaniment of relentless triplets,²⁰⁸ a neutral narrator introduces the protagonists. An hallucinating child sees and hears the Erl King, at first friendly, enticing; the father dismisses the vision as natural phenomena - a wisp of fog or an old tree. Finally the evil Erl King loses patience and brutally kidnaps the fevered, screaming child. In a coda, the father gallops to a safe haven, but too late: 'in his arms - the child - was dead',²⁰⁹ these musical breaks being the gasping breath of a father, who has flogged his horse through the bitter night in search of succour.

What makes one song musically better than another? An awesome riddle! Certain it is that Schubert's harmonic progressions, the mounting intensity, the compounding of the insistent theme and the frightening dissonance when the child is taken by force, make this one of the most powerful songs ever written.

A concert review is a cleft stick for the artist: the artist recognises that a good review is advantageous, but is irritated by criticism. The critic who praises is more highly regarded than one who damns. But critics are difficult to avoid. The critic is presumed to be a qualified arbiter of taste and achievement. But who is qualified? There are few critics whom artists trust. Only large city newspapers and magazines can afford the luxury of a critic with extensive musical knowledge who can concentrate exclusively and extensively on concert activity. Fortunately, in this season, the magazines dedicated to music were unanimous:

²⁰⁶Loewe's also set *Der Erlkönig*, a poem by Goethe. Goethe is said to have preferred Loewe's version, and to have dismissed Schubert's as worthless. Loewe's setting was long the favoured version, because it has more of the romantic sentiment of Victorian songs.

²⁰⁷simply translated, *lied* simply means 'song', but in music it has the connotation of a fine German art song. For convenience, all songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, etc are lumped together as *lieder*, but some songs, like this one are basically ballads.

²⁰⁸ an accompanist's nightmare

²⁰⁹'in seinem Armen das Kind war tot'

*Peter Dawson Comes Home and Proves an Artist,
Season with Hambourg Draws Huge Audiences in Sydney*

was the over-riding tenor of the season. Rarely was fault found with the substantive programme or the extras. From a synthesis of critical opinion²¹⁰ the artists played to capacity houses, a 'phenomena [sic] for these times'. In four concerts Peter Dawson had 'certainly catered for the most catholic tastes - Bach, Beethoven, art songs of Brahms, Foudrian, Loewe, and others, ballads in every mood, Italian and French opera'; 'in every concert, Dawson has dispensed good music, and enhanced the first impression as a gifted interpreter'. Quite a change from 1913! - although some of the old material, like *Ruddier than the cherry* or *Largo al factotum* was still used. Even the accompanist was praised: 'efficient and self-effacing', 'must have been born for this capacity', 'his work was unobtrusive perfection'. Any criticism was reserved for Mark Hambourg, whom the Sydney critic considered more crowd-pleasing than artistic, in summary, 'great was the slaughter'.

That Peter Dawson's innate singing ability and technical prowess were now fully mature, was reflected in the assessments of the great songs: he gave 'the full measure of dignity and power to a recitative and aria from the cantata "Wachet Betet." In this piece that he could give certain proof of his facile technique by delivering 'a lengthy scale passage with perfect legato, and on one breath'; 'his preservation of tone-quality over the wide range was remarkable, but it was in the Aria that we heard the best - lovely sustained singing, and, when the florid phrases came, perfect control'. 'The glorious deep final note, long held' of the encore,²¹¹ Handel's *Hear Me Ye Winds and Waves* 'will be remembered'.

'His broad range enabled him to give an eloquent reading of that lovely Massenet aria, *Vision Fugitive*', and his venture into German paid off: it was 'as good as a lesson in *Mainacht*, and the broad sostenuto "kept the peace" till the end'. 'Leowe's (sic) setting of the tragic ballad, *Edward*' was also singled out for 'not only was it great singing - it was also elocution of the highest order of art. Each exclamatory "O!" was given a different shade of intensity'.

In Hobart²¹² a listener noted encores: (after Adelaide) '*Botschaft* Brahms, *Take those lips away* Measure for Measure Parry'; (after Maud) '*Largo al Diaphenia*'; (after Song of the Flea), '*Boots* Kipling²¹³, *A Banjo Song* Bendana'. In Sydney²¹⁴ a listener noted '*Barber's Song*, *Who is Sylvia*' in the first half; '*Boots*, *Song of the Flea*, *I travel the Road*, *Floral Dance*, *Sincerity*, *Simon the Cellarer*' after the final bracket. With the exception of the routine extra 'old master', the critics²¹⁵ now regarded these 'encores by

²¹⁰taken from newspaper, 1931, 06.20, *Music in Australia*, p10, AMN, 1931, 07.00, p21, Perth newspaper, 1931, 10.04

²¹¹newspaper, 1931, 06.20, 1931, 10.04

²¹²programme, 1931, 09.14:

²¹³*Boots* is by J. P. McCall, that is himself. This note indicates that he introduced the songs himself, laying the emphasis on his much admired poet. Similarly *A Banjo Song* is by Homer.

²¹⁴programme, 1931, 06.06

²¹⁵newspaper, 1931, 06.20, *Music in Australia*; AMN, 1931, 07.00, p21; Perth newspaper, 1931,

popular demand' as an acceptable indulgence. There were 'a jolly lot of encores in popular vein, which no one could deprecate who properly appreciated the substance of the actual programmes'; 'the inevitable "popular" encores have delighted lovers of the obvious and familiar'; 'no fewer than five encores ... on more familiar ground. He dons colloquialisms and dialects as a garment. "Boots", a fine marching song, "I Travel the Road", "The Pride of Tipperary", "The Floral Dance" (no need to announce that!) and "Who Is Sylvia" followed in rapid succession'. Although the tour lasted until the end of October, Hugo Larsen was so satisfied with his enterprise even in July that he cabled The Gramophone Company:²¹⁶ 'Dawson Hambourg tour successful beyond expectation'.

A gossipy, optimistic letter from Peter Dawson, which appeared in the *Australian Musical News*,²¹⁷ sets the scene of the times. An unctuous Editor could not refrain from publishing what purported to be a personal Christmas letter. That 'Australians could be proud' of him is inferred from Peter Dawson's news that the 'charming and brilliant' Prince of Wales had visited one of his BBC studio broadcasts. Peter Dawson was also delighted by the success of many other Australians in England: the hero of the day was Don Bradman, 'the Victorian monarch of the MCC'; the 'flying woman', Amy Johnson, was trying to break the London to Capetown record; Kingsford Smith had been knighted; and - not forgetting himself - 'as Kingsford Smith encircled the world in his plane so somebody said my output in Gramophone records would encircle the world's crust'. This phrase, often repeated in subsequent publicity, was a good way of introducing yet another tour of Australia and New Zealand.

When the idea was floated cannot be determined, but he signed a contract on 24 January, 1933, less than three months before the tour began. The Gramophone Company was aware of the tour earlier; on 11th January²¹⁸ it asked its subsidiary in Sydney to 'do everything possible in the way of advertising to link up with his appearance'. The music publisher, Chappell, was also aware, for two collections of favourite baritone songs, the *First Peter Dawson Album* and the *Second Peter Dawson Album*, were published for the tour and advertised in the programmes. So a number of commercial organisations were riding on his drawing power. The overt confidence of the profession is reflected in Peter Dawson's preface to the albums: the publishers accepted that when he wrote 'I have personally helped to make ['the carefully selected songs'] famous throughout the English-speaking world'; it would help to sell the albums and redress the in-roads made into 'the making of one's own music in the home' 'since the advent of wireless'. The entrepreneur for this tour was the Melbourne firm, J. C. Williamson, which was actually the Tait Brothers, who had entrepreneured the 1909 tour. As the young Peter Dawson had railed against the agents for exacting more than their pound of flesh, it may be assumed that the older, more experienced artist would be wary in the negotiation stages. The 'exclusive'

10.04

²¹⁶EMI, 1931, 07.08

²¹⁷AMN 1933, 02.00, 20-21

²¹⁸EMI, 1933, 01.11

contract²¹⁹ not only specifies Peter Dawson's demands, it gives an insight into the nature of a touring at that time.

The parties agreed to a maximum period of four months 'from the First Concert', unless the parties mutually agreed to extend. There were to be 'not less than 40 Concerts' but 'not exceeding Four (4) in one week'.²²⁰ The artist was to be paid 'One-Third of the Gross Receipts ... at the termination of each Concert' and one third of the nett profit from programme sales. The Company was not to arrange concerts where tickets cost less than 2/- and 'gross receipts less than £200'.²²¹ Any broadcast fees to be divided $\frac{1}{3}:\frac{2}{3}$ also. The Company alone was responsible for management and publicity.

At its own expense, the company was to 'provide a Concert Grand Pianoforte efficiently tuned at each and every concert - an indication that Peter Dawson had had the experience that the pianos in some halls could be far from satisfactory. The agreement that 'the Artist shall pay his own Income-Tax' came home to haunt Peter Dawson on several occasions. There was an illness out-clause, and an agreed start to the tour in Melbourne or Sydney on approximately 'April 24th 1933'. 'Any dispute arising on the Tour' was to be settled in Australia.²²² Only the last point indicates that Peter Dawson had agreed to share the tour with *The Celebrated Chilean Pianist* Tapia-Caballero,²²³ with whom he had already shared a BBC recital. The contract was signed by J. Nevin Tait and Peter Dawson.

The preparation by other companies indicates that an in-principle agreement had been reached much earlier but the substantive contract was only signed after considerable negotiation. Even then, discussion cables must have flown between London and Australia because Peter Dawson and Nan left London at the beginning of March to begin the tour in Perth on 15 April. On the 27 April²²⁴ they arrived in Adelaide for concerts there before pushing on to the other venues.

While there were no doubt convincing reasons, probably financial, which induced Peter Dawson to tour as early as 1933 again, the subtle flavour of the 1931 tour does not appear to have been repeated, despite a remarkable similarity between programmes. Alternative 'old masters' were substituted: *Hail Immortal Bacchus* (Arne), *Ye twice ten hundred deities* (Purcell),

²¹⁹Tait, J & N, 1933, 01.24. typed with minor inked alterations.

²²⁰means two concerts back to back; e.g. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Friday and Saturday are still the most popular evenings; Monday is regarded as the worst evening of the week.

²²¹effectively a guarantee of £66.12.0 per concert; presumably sterling if signed in London. =1996 £788 c.\$A2000 [claim that Hambourg/Dawson 1931 tour averaged £400 per concert, = £200 each now sounds excessive]

²²²Originally 'London', which has been crossed out; 'Australia' has been handwritten and initialled by both parties.

²²³Juan Dzazopulos E., 1993, 04.08: (paraphrased) Arnaldo Tapia Caballero, famous Chilean pianist 1907 -. Spent most of his time in Europe; at 14 degree of "Professor of Piano", 1930 to London; 1931 first Wigmore Hall recital; 1933 Australian tour; 1937 Wigmore Hall. Lived in Vienna until war; USA debut 1949 Town Hall and Carnegie Hall; 1956 Teatro Colón Buenos Aires; 1962 Carnegie Hall. 1960-85 "specialist" in Debussy. Arnoldo: Christian name, Tapia: father's family name; Caballero: mother's family name.

²²⁴Adelaide newspaper, 1933, 04.28; 'the eminent bass-baritone' arrived 'by the East-West express' 'from Perth'; Adelaide newspaper, 1933, 04.29: on 28th he opened the football season at Unley, which indicates how publicity was planned ahead.

When *valiant Ammon* (Battishill), but *Wachet, betet* and *O ruddier than the cherry* were retained. *Maud* was dropped, but *Edward* and *The Erl King* were still used. There were other variations too, such as the introduction of his own *Westward Ho!*, and Head's *Money O!*,²²⁵ but there was no complete change; even the encores were the old familiars.

While the critics' perception may have been that Peter Dawson was 'now so sure of his public that he [could] afford to disregard their preferences and make them listen to a lot of good music' and that he was deliberately 'doing fine work in the musical education of those who regard "Drum Majors" and "Floral Dances" as fine songs', he also had the knack of bringing to 'the feeblest of musical twaddle such a wealth of understanding and vocal address as to make it almost endurable to people who prefer good music, and enormously satisfying to those who don't'.²²⁶

The advertisers, however, knew where the heart of the broader public lay: *His Master's Voice* advertised *Boots, I Travel the Road, Cobbler's Song, The Floral Dance, Room for the Factotum*, and a 'new song', *Old Father Thames*; and The State Bank of Victoria: *You need more than "Boots" When You "Travel the Road"*.

As the Tait's were an excellent and experienced management team Peter Dawson could have reasonably expected to repeat the success of 1931, yet a feeling of personal dissatisfaction surfaced, when he abruptly ended the tour in Melbourne on 26 August. On 16 August a handwritten note from Peter Dawson, on elegant *Hotel Windsor* notepaper,²²⁷ reached Charles Kingston, 'Concert Director for J&N Tait',²²⁸ at his office a block away:

Dear Sirs -

In accordance with the Contract existing between us the time limit expired yesterday (August 15th). At the close of the Four Concerts to take place at the Kings Theatre Melbourne on August 19th, 22nd, 24th, & 26th respectively I have decided to discontinue the present tour.

If trouble was simmering, Kingston was unaware of it; the letter took him completely by surprise. Unable to see Peter Dawson at his hotel, he was constrained to write:²²⁹

Dear Mr Dawson,

I tried several times this afternoon to get into touch with you at the Hotel but without success. I am rather distressed at the decision to finish on Saturday August 26th, because I had arranged for the Theatre to be held free for several weeks so that we could get a run through with the concerts ... I arranged this after our conversation at your flat just prior to my departure from Sydney, when I understood it was our mutual idea to run as many concerts as possible in Melbourne. I brought away 4 programmes, and you indicated for the balance the idea would be the same as in Sydney to publish

²²⁵Head, a baritone himself, wrote many eminently singable songs, of which one, *Money O!*, crops up continually in later programmes.

²²⁶AMN, 1933, 08.00

²²⁷Dawson, (hw), 1933, 08.16

²²⁸programme 1933, 07.22, No. 4, Melbourne; standard all programmes.

²²⁹Kingston, C., 1933, 08.17

the list in the programme of the various popular numbers. However, I do not know what has happened since seeing you to change your plans, but it makes things very difficult from my side.²³⁰

What prompted Peter Dawson to cut his ties with the Taits? As they were constantly dealing with established artists, was their management too impersonal? Was he simply being cantankerous because he sensed that the old adulation of the public was cooling? Or did he have something more interesting to do? Another letter from the Windsor is addressed to the Australian composer, Edith Harry,²³¹ whose composition, *The Mallee Root*²³² was featured in one of the basic programmes:

The 'Mallee Root' went splendidly. The audience were quite interested. I gave 9 big shows in Sydney & only doing 4 here as I have to get back to Sydney for a sound picture.²³³

Unless he made only a brief appearance, there would have been little time for filming, because he was featured in a *Grand Charity Concert Sydney Town Hall* on 9th September and was back in London by the end of October.²³⁴

As the *Grand Charity Concert* was run by a different management, it must have been planned before the Melbourne letter. To engage the artists and prepare the complex programme - which exudes the old flair - would have taken some time. Other artists were two young singers: Elsa Corry, Grace Simpson, flautist Leslie McCallum, pianist Isodor Goodman and his tour accompanist, Hubert Greenslade.²³⁵ Programme advertising included *David Jones'* advertisement of Peter Dawson smoking *Du Maurier* cigarettes with the by-words: "The Du Maurier FILTER TIP stops irritants from getting to my throat and affecting my voice". *Palings'* advertised 'A Beautiful Grand for £195'; *HMV* advertised recordings; and Chappell one of the vocal albums. The actual programme matches others on the tour but this time possible encores are listed:²³⁶ patrons had a choice of an amazing forty five songs, from Old Masters to the 'pops', which would be sung 'according to requests'.²³⁷

²³⁰Kingston wrote a book of memoirs of great artists who toured for the Taits. Around this date he mentions the Scottish tenor, Joseph Hislop, but omits any reference to Peter Dawson - deliberately, it may be assumed.

²³¹Dawson, 1933, 08.24

²³²Harrhy, Edith, *The Mallee Root*, pub: Sydney: Palings, 1932. words Charles Henry Souter; Photo of Peter Dawson on cover; *Mr Peter Dawson* above title

²³³Encyclopedia Britannica, *Motion Pictures*; dtv Encyklopedea, *Cinema*: from 1930 silent films a thing of the past. 1933 motion pictures with sound still a relatively new conception. (author's note) participation not confirmed. Anecdotal evidence only that a person in Sydney holds a film featuring Peter Dawson, but could be one of several made in England.

²³⁴menu, 1933, 10.26: *Restaurant Frascati*, Oxford St. W: 'Welcome Home to Nan & Peter Thursday 26th October 1933'

²³⁵Hubert Greenslade, about twenty-four, was his accompanist on many occasions; in correspondence c.1959 referred to himself as 'old Posts and Rails'.

²³⁶as suggested in Kingston's letter above!

²³⁷programme, 1933, 09.09, p.9 see full list Appendix 10. Some careless mistakes suggest that Peter Dawson did not proof-read the programme; at least the *Prologue* from *Pagliacci* is missing.

Although he would not have realised it, the 1931 tour had been his finest hour. Peter Dawson had reached the pinnacle of his career. By 1933 the depression was acting as an economic brake and before long there were questions about the appropriateness of his repertoire, his stamina, and when he would retire. From 1933 his move into the doyen years developed, the years of acknowledged greatness without commensurate employment.

Occasionally a new song appeared, one of his own compositions,²³⁸ or one such as 'Little Prayer I Love You' by Alba Rizzi²³⁹ which was plugged on the 1935 tour to South Africa.²⁴⁰ But the repertoire had become static. The period of revitalisation had ebbed. Programmes repeated much of the 1931 repertoire. Although his repertoire was vast, he gradually relied on this relatively restricted core of trusted favourites. As he fought his rear-guard action with the Gramophone Company he became more dependent on concert appearances. He dabbled in films but there was little demand; either he had no taste for filming or he did not suit that industry.²⁴¹ His only international touring outlet now was Australia and New Zealand. The publisher, Chappell's, must have believed that Peter Dawson would open the 1939 Celebrity Season for the ABC, because it advertised the tour,²⁴² but in March the news was already out that this tour had been 'deferred'.²⁴³ Two months later he was coming anyway - for a different management.²⁴⁴ The question of retirement loomed large²⁴⁵ when he arrived in May to begin an exclusive tour for Greater Union Theatres. His bitterness towards ABC management was plain. He was vitriolic about broadcasting:²⁴⁶ while admitting that radio may have had broadened the public taste, it had 'killed musical societies', it 'reduced opportunities for young musicians';²⁴⁷ people became indifferent to his recordings, because they were played too often - and television would 'make the plight of the average musician a great deal

²³⁸programme, 1938: 'Songs by J. P. McCall: "The 'Prentice Lads o' Cheap" [pub 1938], "The Dreamer" [1928], "The Fret-foot" [1938]'; programme, 1939, 03.01: CWS Male Voice Choir, Newcastle-on-Tyne (last before his return to Australia): J.P.McCall *The Three Souls*, [1937]; *Heart o' the Romany Rye*, [ms 1938]; *Westward Ho!* [1933]

²³⁹Peter Dawson had a true affection for the sacred sentiments of this song. He used it many times subsequently; to fulfil the composer's request, he even sang it at her graveside. London, newspaper, 1950, 04.09, *Her famous song as funeral hymn*: 'a setting to the old Saxon prayer, "God be in Thy Head and in Thy Understanding"'

²⁴⁰EMI, 1935, 01.28

²⁴¹not considered relevant to main thrust of argument. see Appendix 11 for outline.

²⁴²An advertisement on the back of their sheet music of *Cells* by J. P. McCall: 'Peter Dawson's Australian and New Zealand Tour 1939: The Famous Baritone will sing many of his best known song including the following recent following publications'; lists 13 popular Peter Dawson ballads plus a new baritone album, *Songs About Sailors*

²⁴³AMN, 1939, 03.00, 24; The popular Australian singer was to bowl the first ball of the celebrity season - Broadcasting Commission announces that this has been deferred.

²⁴⁴AMN, 1939, 05.00, 2

²⁴⁵Adelaide newspaper, 1939, 05.24: retire and live in Adelaide after making a world tour; Adelaide newspaper, 1939, 06.04: will enter the manufacturing business of his brother, William Dawson, at Camperdown, Sydney

²⁴⁶Adelaide newspaper 1939, 05.24, 1939, 06.04 appears in Brisbane, (Ed), 1991, 244

²⁴⁷the upset is reported also in AMN, 1939, 06.00, 13: Peter Dawson advised young people NOT to take up singing; radio was a hard vicious business for young singers; occasionally fame overnight but success fleeting.

worse'. The ABC had no respect for him: they had made him a puerile offer to sing 'in all sort of out-of-the-way-places, such as Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill'²⁴⁸ and at the worst time: 'before Easter'. To make matters worse, when he had suggested postponing the tour until the following year, he had heard on the grapevine that the ABC believed he had outlived his appeal.²⁴⁹ In his inimitable style, he turned to the cinema tour with the same optimistic enthusiasm he had brought to his music hall appearances. Here he was given the treatment he expected and his premonition of December, 1931 was vindicated. At that time another Christmas letter had appeared,²⁵⁰ in which he predicted that, for 'the talkies' to survive commercially, they should be interrupted by live appearances of 'world-famous instrumentalists and singers':

Imagine those gloriously appointed picture theatres, seats such heavens of comfort compared to the hot-cross-bun chair of ye concert hall! No draughts, beautiful soft lighting, acoustics nigh perfect, stage lighting, the presentation of each item studied in every detail plus an all-time orchestra

He had painted the picture of his own appearance at the refurbished State Cinema, Sydney in June 1939, when he completed the first half of a complex programme of short films and live performance, which led to the feature film, *The Mikado*, in the new-fangled technicolor after an 'Intermission'.²⁵¹ While the audience was still chuckling at the cartoon, curtains opened as the screen disappeared into the flies, then 'Peter Dawson was seen advancing round the curve of a great black and white staircase with long windows at the back'. After he had sung his favourite introductory number, *Largo al factotum*, 'lights in the windows changed to soft red and blue for a more sentimental song *The Forest Prays*. A Kipling ballad, a song by John Ireland and the famous *Boots* completed his program'.²⁵² The Australian operatic tenor, Kenneth Neate, remembers:²⁵³

Peter Dawson sang at the Sydney State Theatre between films as was the custom in the 30's to present leading artists. I did a similar stunt in 1939 just before meeting Peter when he was over 60: he sang without microphone [sic] "Largo al factotem", [sic] "The Lute Player", "Old Man River", "Old Father Thames", "There'll always be an England" etc.

The period 1940-47 warrants a separate study.²⁵⁴ When Peter Dawson became cooped up in Australia by the Second World War, he was fifty-seven years old. He had had a fulsome career but was now faced with the stark reality of surviving as best he could in an alternative environment.

²⁴⁸was quite happy to sing in Broken Hill in 1947 and 1951! - see Chapter 5.2: Broadcasting - ABC

²⁴⁹newspaper, 1939, 06.04: 'I learned that a member of the Commission had told a newspaper that the Commission did not want Peter Dawson on any terms in 1940 or any other year'.

²⁵⁰AMN, 1932, 02.00, 4-5

²⁵¹for details see *Mikado* Appendix 11

²⁵²Brisbane, (ed), 1991, 244

²⁵³Neate, 1984, 06.14. Neate was one of Australia's first successful post-war international tenors; was resident in Munich. (died 1997)

²⁵⁴this period dealt with in detail Chapter 5: Broadcasting - ABC

Although he claims to have survived financially on 'the princely sum of £12 per week,²⁵⁵ the remuneration appears to have been little more than a sinecure, for Peter Dawson's blatant patriotism, which epitomised the prevalent mood, was useful to the authorities, who were quick to use the skills of its famous son for propaganda. In an interview he claimed that 'the patriotic sentiment' in one recruiting song, (*Now or Never*), was 'so vigorous that it aroused the anger of pacifists'²⁵⁶ and on his way back to England in 1947: 'throughout the war [I] sang at concerts for the troops in all parts of Australia and at the sales of war-bonds both in Australia and New Zealand'.²⁵⁷

By the time the war ended he could write: 'I have appeared and sung for all factions in Sydney over six years & until they must regard me as a piece of wall paper'.²⁵⁸ He was 63, hardly the age at which he could expected to revive his career. Although his music genre was dead in the water, the English impresario, Harold Fielding, sensed that there was still a substantial conservative core of the population, especially in the provinces, that held fast to the old values which Peter Dawson personified. So in 1947, after another incursion into New Zealand, his concert career in England continued.

To 'make more farewell performances than Nellie Melba' has slipped into Australian slang. Peter Dawson was no different. While there was an opportunity to sing he took it. His voice was his life. In theory he could appreciate that there should be a time to retire, but he could always be encouraged to 'sing one more time'. In fairness, this impulse is not restricted to Peter Dawson. With few exceptions most 'performers'²⁵⁹ cannot 'leave the stage', but Peter Dawson's fame singles him out for particular attention.

There is no reason why a good singer should be unable to sing well at sixty-five years of age. The deep diaphragmatic breathing prolongs the capability of the voice indefinitely and is as good as any panacea.²⁶⁰ Factors against continuing this sound regime are many: a waning impetus to continue the daily routine of practice and preparation necessary for vocal good health, musical indigestion (too much repertoire for too long), less and less incentive if fewer and fewer performance requests, a sideways move into teaching or musical administration, ennui.

Nevertheless, there is a hackneyed perception that age brings with it physical decline, that anyone who does not succumb is a latter-day

²⁵⁵newspaper 1951, 04.25. £624 p.a. does not sound much but as late as 1955 £20 per week was a salary for a qualified accountant.

²⁵⁶Australian newspaper, 1951, 04.25. For detail of 1952 NZ Bond tour see Chapter 5.2: Broadcasting - ABC

²⁵⁷Colombo newspaper, 1947, 08.05

²⁵⁸Dawson, hw, c.1946 to brother-in-law Tom Noble. Maybe a draft of a letter seeking Tom's help in organising a return to London.

²⁵⁹politicians, sportspersons, business leaders - anyone accustomed to public attention and adulation

²⁶⁰without arguing the point too long the value of any exercise lies in the stimulation of blood circulation produced by accelerated breath intake. Control of the breath intake and dispersion has the same or more value because it involve mind control also; the same principle lies in movement control such as mime, in meditation, and yoga.

superman, a stereotype, which Peter Dawson was quick to exploit. In Colombo he referred to 'a six-month contract for 70 concerts in the British Isles with the option of extension of the tour for another six weeks for another 70 concerts';²⁶¹ in London it became 'a year's tour which will mean 140 concerts'.²⁶² He remained in England for a year and a half. When he left London he did not tell the press that he was returning home but making his '10th tour of Australia and New Zealand'.²⁶³ By the time he arrived home in February 1949, the number of concerts had been modified to 89, to the original 70 plus an additional 19.²⁶⁴

The repertoire is not available, but there is little doubt that he would open his concerts with *O ruddier than the cherry* or *Largo al factotum*, turn to a mixture of ballads in the second and third brackets, then probably finish with *I travel the Road*, *The Road to Mandalay*, *Boots*, or *The Floral Dance*.

And still the Grand Tour had not dried up. Although he was kept busy enough in Australia and had made another jaunt through New Zealand, he claimed that a taxation burden made it necessary to make a final, final return tour of England in 1950:²⁶⁵

In his flat in Dolphin-square, London last night he said: "I have to raise money for my next [trip] home to Australia. I have £600 - just enough to pay the rent of this flat. When I came back here in 1947 I had to pay a lot of income tax before I left Australia. Waiting for me here was a heavy demand for tax on money I earned ten years earlier. Then travelling expenses. My wife goes everywhere with me. I could not do without her, and that doubles hotel bills and fares.

Again Harold Fielding had been able to organise a substantial tour, 'over 60 concerts', of the provinces. On this tour Peter Dawson took with him a young Australian accompanist, Geoffrey Parsons. They left on 'January 28 1950' for 'a ten months concert tour of Britain'.²⁶⁶ When Geoffrey Parsons returned for the 1988 bicentennial concert season he admitted that the turning point, which led to his own establishment as an international accompanist, 'was not in serious repertory':²⁶⁷

The ballad singer Peter Dawson needed an accompanist to tour New Zealand with him and [Parsons] was delighted to be engaged again for the next year, 1950, when Dawson went to sing in Britain. It was a six months concert tour that turned into permanent residence. Showbiz, smiles and endless performances of *The Road To Mandalay* lasted until Dawson came

²⁶¹Colombo newspaper, 1947, 08.05

²⁶²London newspaper, 1947, 08.26

²⁶³London newspaper, 1948, 12.11

²⁶⁴Adelaide newspaper, 1949, 01.07, AMN, 1949, 02.00, 22, newspaper, 1949, 02.05, *The ABC Weekly*

²⁶⁵London newspaper, 1950, 03.27

²⁶⁶AMN, 1950, 01.00, 7. [Possibly Parsons followed for tour was scheduled to commence 18 April [newspaper, 1950, 03.26] but Peter Dawson may have flown for he appears to have been in London in December 1949; he certainly took part in the Australia Day broadcast, 26 January]

²⁶⁷White, 1988, 'Geoffrey Parsons' in 'Music Lover's Guide to the bicentennial concert season' in *Symphony Australia*

home and handed Parsons over to fellow variety stars Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth, the intensity of whose shimmering love duets was equalled only by the bitterness of their backstage rows.

In October Peter Dawson was back in Australia 'after a year's tour of Britain'.²⁶⁸ His appearance always surprised his concert audience. Gone was the keenness and nervousness of the 21 year-old filling in a blank spot of Madame Albani's tour; gone was the lean athleticism of the young colonial rascal. From the mid-twenties he was the confident man of a thousand concerts, whom Gladys Moncrieff knew. In the fifties he had become so well known through gramophone recordings and radio broadcasts, that those who ventured into the concert hall still projected this image of the virility from the sound:²⁶⁹

I saw him in the flesh at Ealing Town Hall, and being sure he must be tall, commanding and distinguished, was surprised to find him short, rather portly and unremarkable in appearance. But it did not detract from the Golden Voice.

And interviewed in 1950²⁷⁰ after an open-air concert in Sydney:

to most of his fellow-countrymen a favourite record-and-radio voice rather than a living person ... in the flesh they saw and heard a short, bald, but heavily handsome man ... his skin has a trace of the softness grease-paint gives to the skins of theatre people.

He had left a legacy of music which he had recorded for the BBC too that was to be broadcast in 1951. He was still in demand in Australia, still enjoying life. James Glennon recalls a social evening in Adelaide:²⁷¹

He told many good stories that night. He sang, told more stories, then sang again till midnight. At nine o'clock next morning he was at the ABC studios to record two groups of songs for future broadcast.

Since 1945 photographs of Peter Dawson and his wife, Nan, show her as a frail, grey-haired lady dressed in sober elegance in the latest fashion. 'Nowadays she is far from robust, and her white hair and soft, slow voice give an impression of frailty and of a person who has suffered much physical pain.'²⁷² Nan was Peter Dawson's constant companion throughout his life. On tour she was always at his side: she played for him, she was his 'professional adviser', she was his guardian, she allowed no-one to speak to him before concerts. ²⁷³ On 10 June 1951 Nan's youngest sister, Constance Bedford Noble²⁷⁴ made a note in her diary: 'Wrote to Nanner, asking if they

²⁶⁸Adelaide newspaper 1950, 10.30: arrived yesterday in Perth on the *Orcades*

²⁶⁹Vineham, H., 1983, 01.13

²⁷⁰newspaper, 1951, 04.24

²⁷¹Glennon, 1968, 47, biography *Australian Music & Musicians*. Says Peter Dawson 72, therefore 1954. Significant match with 1958, 04.29: Photo & Extract from Minutes of the Savage Club AGM.

²⁷²Australian newspaper, 1951, 04.24

²⁷³biography, nephews, 1993, 03.25

²⁷⁴the one for whom Peter Dawson had drawn a cartoon in her new autograph book in

would like me to come out to Australia'. Peter Dawson and Nan had led a Darby and Joan existence but by 1951 it had become prudent to accept Con's help. She arrived at the end of the year to help care for her now ailing sister. From Con's diary it is clear that 1952 was not a happy year for the family:

Nannie's health seemed to be getting worst. Nannie taken to "Masonic Hospital" Ashfield 7pm suffering from coronary occlusion paralytic seizure, 6" Sat Dec: 1952. Nannie died 11=45pm, on the 31st Jan: 1953.

"Don't go back," the dying Nan had whispered to Constance. "Stay on and look after the old boy."²⁷⁵ Sad as it was, Nan's death was not unexpected. Peter Dawson was now left with alone with a sister-in-law, seventeen years his junior, on whom he and Nan had come to rely.

'Pete & I left for Adelaide on the 13th Feb, 1953, my first plane trip, from Mascot', appears in Con's diary. A year later, when yet another final tour to England was in the planning stage:²⁷⁶ *Singer 73 weds again*. Married Sydney April 30, 'Friends and relatives say the wedding was not a surprise, but was very quiet'. Like her sister before her, Con became his constant companion, prepared to share the happiness and vicissitudes of his final years.

Peter Dawson and Con left Australia about the beginning of November²⁷⁷ and were interviewed in London on 12 December.²⁷⁸ At the end of January 1955 EMI²⁷⁹ knew that Harold Fielding was 'arranging a provincial tour for Peter Dawson', who was 'in wonderful voice (possibly because he has married a new wife!)'. Again details of the tour itinerary and repertoire are not available but the pattern is predictable. Broadcasting and television appearances of the virile 73-year old created a sensation, which must have left the septuagenarian and his wife satisfied and optimistic when they departed on 12 May, 1955²⁸⁰ - promising to return in the Spring.

But at last the curtain was falling. Like his friend Mark Hambourg, who, although crippled with gout, was still playing publicly in 1951,²⁸¹ Peter Dawson still found a few fleeting opportunities in Australia for he was still venerated by a disappearing generation. 'The Emperor of Bond Street' had long recognised this characteristic of the Empire.²⁸²

One curious point in connection with our artistes is the loyalty of our public to old favourites. Once they have established a reputation, they can go on singing until there is not a musical note in the box.

October, 1913

²⁷⁵London newspaper, 1955, 04.26

²⁷⁶ABC/AA, 1954, 05.12, *Radio Call*

²⁷⁷Vaccination certificates; travellers cheques drawn.

²⁷⁸London newspaper, 1954, 12.11

²⁷⁹EMI, 1955, 01.27

²⁸⁰English newspaper, 1955, 04.28

²⁸¹Australian newspaper, 1951, 04.25

²⁸²Boosey, 1931, 1931, 66

Chapter 5

Broadcasting Part 1: BBC 1922-1955

'The first radio station to transmit regular broadcasts was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1920'.¹ The first extant programme transmitted by the 'British Broadcasting Co. Ltd.', 'the first European station', was on Thursday, 16 November, 1922. Prior to this date programmes

had been broadcast from London, Birmingham, and Manchester, under the auspices of the Marconi, Radio Communications, Metropolitan Vickers, British Thomson-Houston, General Electric and Western Electric Companies, principal shareholders in the subsequently registered British Broadcasting Company.²

The first programmes were transmitted from Birmingham and Manchester 'on [Wednesday] November 15th 1922, and 'according to tradition, the London regular service was opened on the previous day [Tuesday 14th]'. The British Broadcasting Company, a commercial company, became the newest player in the British entertainment market. Like any new player in any line of business, the BBC altered not only the configuration but the balance of the entertainment industry. Although it had its own unique character, it unintentionally ruined the last remnants of promotional ballad concerts and the Victorian drawing room culture by offering a simpler form of access to aural information than concert-going or personal performance. 'From the outset music occupied a high proportion of broadcast material, in the form of live relays, studio recordings and gramophone records'.³ The recording industry was well developed by the 1920s and the two media were in some respects mutually beneficial, records being broadcast and broadcasting promoting sales. Because his recordings were among those broadcast, Peter Dawson became affected immediately, but, as no broadcasting royalties were paid to artists, this aspect of the new industry remained a thorn in his side for a long time.

His first experience in front of the broadcast microphone occurred already three months after the foundation of the BBC, on the evening of Australia Day, 1923. Although Dame Nellie Melba had been heard on the *Childrens Hour* at 5pm,⁴ she was not part of the group assembled by the High Commissioner, Sir Joseph Cook, for a direct broadcast to Australia from Australia House. Those Australian artists were:⁵

¹Goslich, S., 'Broadcasting', in *New Grove*, 1980

²BBC, 1922, 11.14 (= BBC Written Archives Centre, Programme Records, Volume 1, 1922-28, 14 November, 1922)

³Goslich, S., 'Broadcasting', in *New Grove*, 1980

⁴BBC, 1923, 01.26, 5pm

⁵BBC, 1923, 01.26, 8.15pm. as listed [Note that Lauri Kennedy, Peter Dawson, Stanton Jeffries are listed for the Payling Concert at the Queens Hall 1923, 04.14 in Chapter 4]

Clara Serena (contralto), Harold Williams (bar), Stella Power (Sop) Ada Crossley (cont.), Daisy Kennedy (violin), Albert Whelan (entertainer), Malcolm McEachern (bass), Gertrude Johnson (sop), Alfred O'Shea (tenor), Rose Alba (sop), Lauri Kennedy (cello), Peter Dawson (bass).
At the piano: Anne Williams, Irenon Asdaile, W. G. James, Stanton Jeffries
ARCM

Malcolm McEachern sang *Three Australian Bush Songs*, accompanied by the composer, W. G. James. At 9.45 pm Peter Dawson sang, unaccompanied, '*Ships that pass in the night* (Hermann Bedfo...)' and '*Star of the East* (Hermann Lohr)'

Peter Dawson's memory of the occasion was:⁶

a big Australia House party, with Melba, Percy Grainger, and other celebrities present. 'They hauled me out, shoved a microphone into my hand and told me to start singing!' he said. 'There wasn't a piano, so I sang '*Ships that pass in the night*' unaccompanied. We had a lot of enquiries from ships at sea, all wanting to know what had happened to the piano, and if it had been lost on the way!'

In 1927 the British Broadcasting Company became a public utility and was re-named the British Broadcasting Corporation. Considering his profile in the concert and recording industries, it could be expected that after this early debut Peter Dawson's name would feature among the early broadcast recitalists, yet there is a dearth of programmes until a broadcast from the Palladium in December 1930. Either he was not interested in the BBC or the BBC was not interested in him. He does appear 'among others' in a Carol Concert by the Royal Choral Society at the Royal Albert Hall (1924),⁷ and with the 'Barclays Bank Male Voice Choir' (1925),⁸ when he sang: *Phyllis* (Anthony Young) and *I'll sail upon the Dog-star* (Purcell) with choir and organ, and *Recognition of Land* (Grieg) with piano accompaniment.

On 2 December, 1930 the BBC picked up a 'Peter Dawson: Song Recital from the Palladium',⁹ with a Mr Johnson as accompanist. It might be expected that a programme from a music hall would consist of fairly light ballads. Peter Dawson chose a Mozart aria, *Now your days of philandering are over*, to establish his credentials. No disrespect to Mozart, who knew only too well that he had created a pop song in his own era,¹⁰ the 'aria' is so teasing and balladesque that a non-discerning audience could hardly hear the difference between the work of the master and the ballads which followed: *The Lute Player*, *At Santa Barbara*, *Boots*.

A few months later, in March 1931, just before the Australasian tour, Peter Dawson broadcast again from the Palladium accompanied by the BBC Dance Orchestra.¹¹ The programme followed a similar formula: something serious leading into the ballads: *Don Juan's Serenade* (Tschaikowsky), *A*

⁶London newspaper, 1955, 08.26: *A Mighty Man of Song*

⁷BBC, 1924, 12.20, National 2.30

⁸BBC, 1925, 04.25, National 7.30pm

⁹BBC, 1930, 12.02

¹⁰was so well-known that he could parody it himself in *Don Giovanni*.

¹¹BBC, 1931, 03.19

Banjo Song, I travel the road, Journey's End. After twenty-five years recording Peter Dawson could remark that 'in those days' a concert artist 'took 15 years' to establish himself, whereas 'now you can make a name in a week on the wireless'.¹² He had developed the standard ploy of praising his employers: a good tactic used during the tour. Photographed in front of a microphone, 'Peter Dawson the well-known baritone' willingly gave 'his views and experience of broadcasting'.¹³ At the Commonwealth Club luncheon in Adelaide he had also said that¹⁴ 'people appreciated music more since the advent of the wireless and the gramophone', but these had not affected audience attendances because 'after having heard records, people wished to see the artists in the flesh' - "And be disappointed!" remarked Mark Hambourg.

As soon as he was back in London, the *Star* published a photo of Peter Dawson to advertise another programme relayed from the Palladium,¹⁵ although the accompanist, Gerald Moore, was not important enough to rate a mention. At 10.44pm they broadcast: *The Cobbler's Song, Myself when young, The Great Highway, and Boots*.¹⁶

Almost ten years after the establishment of the BBC, on 11 May 1932, Peter Dawson sang his first recital from the BBC studios. The programme was lifted from the 1931 tour:¹⁷ *Die Mainacht, Botschaft, Marins d'Islande, Le Manoir de Rosemonde, Recit & Air: Hear me, ye winds and waves* (Handel), *A Sea Gypsy* (Head), *Kingfisher Blue* (Woodforde-Finden), and the perennial encores: *I travel the Road* and *Boots*. Acknowledged as 'the first radio recital' under the rubric: *The "10,000,000 Records" Broadcaster*,¹⁸ it had 'something of exceptional quality for all but the most crabbed critic', no doubt due to his work and preparation ethic for he was 'as conscientious about the learning of a popular ballad as he [was] when preparing a recital of classics'; he 'works solidly every morning with an accompanist even if he has no immediate concerts or engagements'. Fortunately, Peter Dawson was 'one of that rare class of musicians that is entirely unspoiled by success'; 'the same natural, modest, delightful person he was twenty years ago'.

In July he shared another substantial recital;¹⁹ again some of his best material was used: *Adelaide, O liebliche Wangen, La Caravane, Chanson de la Touraine* (Massenet), *Promenade à mule, Speak Music, Rann of Exile*; and in November Stanford Robinson conducted the BBC Orchestra (Section. E) in another solid programme,²⁰ which began with 'Recit: *Ah, shall not this great day of wrath, Aria: Thou most blessed all-quickenning day*' then *Largo al factotum* - but no prizes for guessing the last two.

The number of broadcasts, circa one hundred during the course of his lifetime, may suggest a constant flow of engagements. In fact, the bulk of

¹²EMI, 1931, 04.00, *The Voice*, pp.8-9

¹³newspaper, 1931, 08.29, *The Listener* In Vol 7 No 25

¹⁴Adelaide newspaper, 1931, 09.22

¹⁵London newspaper, 1931, 12.19

¹⁶BBC, 1931, 12.19

¹⁷BBC, 1932, 11.05

¹⁸London newspaper, 1932, 05.11 (*Daily Express* 'Radioviews' by Gibson Young)

¹⁹BBC, 1932, 07.28

²⁰BBC, 1932, 11.15

these are crowded into his last two visits to London in his later years; even at his peak, an artist like Peter Dawson could only expect three or four contracts annually. A BBC engagement would simply be the equivalent of another concert engagement in an uncertain calendar.

To judge by the continuing quality of the programmes, either Peter Dawson used these programmes to satisfy his desire to sing quality music whenever possible, or BBC management had already developed the parameters for serious music. In either case, the programmes strongly reflect the material of the Wigmore and Aeolian Hall recitals, the best English composers and the best material from his 1931 and 1933 tours. Admittedly ballads, many his own, were not excluded as they fitted appropriately at the lighter end of recitals.

In January 1933, before the Australian tour, the final item, after a number of Schubert lieder, featured indeed the premiere of a new J.P. McCall composition, *The Pirate goes West, or Westward Ho!*²¹ Two months later,²² he shared the recital time with his partner for the forthcoming tour, the pianist Tapia-Caballero, and on their return they shared another programme,²³ in which his tour accompanist, Hubert Greenslade, was also named. Whether the recitals fed the concerts or the concerts fed the recitals, the repertoire was the same, and *Westward Ho!* now shared the conclusion honours with the other two familiars.

Radio was certainly a simple means of communication, simpler than the record player, and steadily making technical progress. In 1929²⁴ Peter Dawson had already referred to his 'testimonial in connection with the portable wireless set', expecting in return for that favour 'to be given one' for 'I travel greatly by motor car throughout the country & I should never be without it.' This enthusiasm for the growing ubiquity of radio was not shared by a prophet in 1933:²⁵

I see the car radio as a most retrograde step. Are we nowhere to escape the loudspeaker? Is all our travelling in the future to be accompanied by wireless entertainment and instruction? Is this generation not only to have "music wherever she goes", but sporting commentaries, the latest news, vaudeville, jazz, and talks, as well?

Yes they were. Silence for the broadcaster was anathema. In commercial radio the advertisers had found a new intrusive, pervasive method of insinuating the benefits of their products to the potential purchaser. But the national broadcaster, securely funded, could continue to chew up performers from the vast pool available, for they too believed that audiences wanted variety. In 1934 Peter Dawson was engaged to talk about 'making gramophone records at H.M.V. studios'.²⁶ The programme, *In*

²¹BBC, 1933, 01.29. Peter Dawson interchanges both titles in programmes, but in this dissertation listed and collated as *Westward Ho!*

²²BBC, 1933, 03.02

²³BBC, 1933, 11.16

²⁴EMI, 1929, 11.26

²⁵*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 59

²⁶BBC, 1934, 01.06: *In Town Tonight* (VIII)

Town Tonight, purported to interview personalities, who were passing through London. As Peter Dawson had not been too long back from Australia he sort of fitted. As the preparation sheet is available²⁷ the interview technique may be imagined. The data on the sheet could have been the product of independent research, but the reference to the last two tours indicates that the original source of the information was Peter Dawson. It begins:

Peter Dawson
He is an Australian.
He is of course the famous bass-baritone.
He is one of the best known gramophone recording artists in the World

As the point of the interview was to talk about the gramophone business, his prominence and experience in the industry were lauded, then a few lines about his touring experience 'nearly all around the world', 'sung all over Great Britain for the last thirty years', and has recently 'made two return tours of Australia'. To stimulate the conversation the interlocutor had also noted:

suggested questions
What is the strangest audience to which he ever sang?
The most difficult moment he ever had in public? (He has had a lot of funny experiences on the concert platform when things have gone wrong,)
Is it true his parents came from Scotland?
How many records does he think he has made?
How many letters does he get after a broadcast?

How much progress have BBC personalities and their international counterparts made since then?

As Peter Dawson loved to tell stories about the recording studio, especially the early days, he no doubt rose to the occasion as usual and took the burden of intellectual pursuit from the shoulders of his host. On that Saturday evening he also sang the song which Leslie Boosey had presented to him on his return from the last tour, Maurice Besley's *England*, - the song which turned up again in 1940 as his own *Australia* - and, in similar nationalistic mode, his own unpublished *The Glory of the Motherland*.²⁸

In 1934 he had three more opportunities to present recitals of excellent quality; in 1935 he was a guest with the BBC Dance Orchestra;²⁹ during the week in which the 25th anniversary of the accession of King George V was celebrated he gave a recital, not too heavy,³⁰ which included Alba Rizzzi's *The little prayer I love*, which he was plugging on the South African tour that year, and his *The Glory of the Motherland*, which was now published.³¹ A *Jubilee Gala*³² without Peter Dawson would be unthinkable; within the week he was singing again. Two orchestras were used: the 'serious' BBC

²⁷BBC, 1934,01.06: preparation sheet for interview with Peter Dawson *In Town Tonight*

²⁸J. P. McCall. Incorrect in BBC record as *The Glory of Motherhood*

²⁹BBC, 1935, 01.05

³⁰BBC, 1935, 05.05

³¹by Swan

³²BBC, 1935, 05.11

Theatre Orchestra, conducted by Stanford Robinson, and the *BBC Variety Orchestra* conducted by S. Kneate Kelley. Difference in quality was nominal: Peter Dawson sang three ballads: his serious contribution was *England*; the variety: Edward German's excellent ballad, in which the singer can develop a 'glorious' tone, *In glorious Devon*, - and Kipling along behind it - *Boots*.

When the Proms were under Chappell's management Peter Dawson had appeared regularly but although their management had been taken over by the new British Broadcasting Corporation in 1927³³ he does not appear again until September 1935.³⁴ He appeared again in November³⁵ to which a newspaper responded:³⁶

Peter Dawson. He provided the only exciting moments in an evening of badly planned programmes. His voice soothes, invigorates, excites in one breath. The quality is ageless. Is as vital as when first recorded on wax thirty-one years ago.

Peter Dawson's radio activities project a profile of one of the most respected artists of his era, one whose charisma could reliably reach the radio audience. Listed on the printed page engagements appear plentiful: compared with other engagements they were minimal. In this period when his commercial value to The Gramophone Company was rapidly diminishing, this new technical development in the electronic industry appeared to be extending his career. Instead, it was really hiding the truth, for it merely reused old material associated with his name, instead of providing a platform for renewing the artistic product. The demand for his services by various departments of the BBC made up for some lost recording revenue, but seen as income for a year the return was pitiful. Peter Dawson feared, correctly, that the development of radio would deplete the record market. Recitals may have compensated a little financially, but he was well aware that he received no compensation when his records were used.

The notion of sharing income with the artists, who had created a work, had always been an obtuse conception in any industry. Industry worked on the assumption that one payment completed a commercial agreement. A company believed it had bought the artistic product, owned the artistic product, could mass-produce the product, and exploit it in any way, to maximise the financial return. William Boosey's predecessor, his uncle, John, had graciously 'paid royalties to the composers and also to the singers who introduced a new song' in his early Ballad Concerts, but in William Boosey's time only the pre-eminent Dame Clara Butt could demand them.³⁷ An effective Copyright Act had not existed in England since 1842! Finally, in 1911, Churchill, driven by William Boosey and like-minded men, forced a new Act through Parliament.³⁸ But copyright for a creative artist was one

³³Boosey, 1931, 65; 98-99; 179 and Blailey, D., 'Ballad concerts Boosey & Chappell' in *New Grove*, 1980

³⁴BBC, 1935, 09.14

³⁵BBC, 1935, 11.05

³⁶London newspaper, 1935, 11.06: Jonah Barrington on 'Radio High-spots'

³⁷Boosey, 1931, 26-27

³⁸Boosey, 1931, 145; 154-55. However, a version of this practice must have continued, as a

thing, royalties for a performer another.

Originally radio paid no royalties on broadcasts of recordings and it took years for Peter Dawson to change this policy. His argument, that listening to a broadcast was the equivalent of listening to a record without buying it, fell on deaf ears. If the listener had bought the record, he argued, he would have received a royalty; therefore, if the record was played as a substitute for employing him, he should receive a royalty in lieu.

That the individual should have had such a battle, when the recording industry aggressively protected its own vested interest, is another one of those commercial conundrums, in which the interests of the firms are not conceptually interrelated with the interests of the personnel on which the firm depends. In August 1927 part of the daily broadcasting programme was the "gramophone hour":³⁹ by April 1933 it could be said that 'clearly the listening public likes gramophone programmes' but there was 'no danger that the BBC will damage the record-selling industry by excess of repetition' because 'a much more enlightened policy' of 'two hours a day from any one station' had been agreed with the gramophone industry. The gramophone industry had agreed to this extraordinary policy because it would receive a payment for every record played.

Peter Dawson believed that he - and other artists - should receive a share, which led to the saga of the broadcast fees in the contract discussions dating from November 1935.⁴⁰ By the time the contract was signed Peter Dawson's rights were protected in England through *Phonographic Performance Ltd.* which collected royalties on behalf of artistes. This resolution should have been satisfactory but Peter Dawson had pointed out his concern about the effect of record sales on concerts when he returned from the 1933 tour. He considered that record usage affected him 'world-wide' but for the moment collecting royalties internationally remained unresolved:

there is no body similar to Phonographic Performance in Australia and it has not been settled whether an ex-gratia payment, if any, shall be made to artistes for the public performance of their records ... different recording companies (including E.M.I.) have made direct arrangements regarding payment for the broadcasting of their records in Australia, but ... any decision as to giving artists a share in the proceed, must be an Industry matter and cannot be dealt with by one company alone.⁴¹

It is doubtful whether those obliged to negotiate with Peter Dawson or his agents would agree that he was 'entirely unspoiled by success', 'the same natural, modest, delightful person he was twenty years ago'. He now understood his value, and had no intention of relinquishing his rightful financial compensation. He was the first to fight this injustice. His forceful

great number of songs, which Peter Dawson sang or composed are favoured with his name and photograph. But this practice would be after he had become an established artist, much later than 1911

³⁹*The Gramophone Jubilee Book*, 1973, 192: 'Broadcasting Records'.

⁴⁰EMI, 1935, 11.23

⁴¹EMI, 1935, 12.05. No documentation available to determine when Peter Dawson finally received a fee for records broadcast outside England, but presume it was resolved around this period as a Performing Rights Society exists in Australia as in England.

correspondence with The Gramophone Company⁴² led ultimately to a system of control which ensured that performers received a royalty for every record used.

1936 was another productive year with the BBC. At the beginning of January the second half of a *Prom* concert, the lighter material, was broadcast.⁴³ After singing the published *Smuggler's Song* and *Round Away Down* (Leo Peter), he chose two far superior encores: *Speak Music* and *Rann of Exile*. This standard was maintained in four recitals during the year.

The BBC had now existed for fourteen years; confirmation of dealings with artists was typed onto set forms. Apart from the agreement on the fee, a wealth of other information was needed from the artist: repertoire to plan the programme, timings for length, composer and publishers for royalties. A typed letter from Peter Dawson indicates the thought and preparation that went into a programme.⁴⁴

Peter Dawson

10, Evelyn Grove,
Ealing Common W.5.
Acorn 4024

Tuesday, November 3rd. 36 8.30

1. The Garden of Allah	Chas. Marshall/Boosey	3
2. Hope, the Hermit	(17th Century) Chappell	3
3. Sleepy Barges	Dudley Glass MS.	3
4. Parted	Tosti Ricordi	3
5. Green grow the Rushes O!	Words by Burns, Music Trad.	3
6. Reminiscence (New)	Vern Buck Broadhurst	3
7. Song of the Thames	Alan Murray Chappell	3
8. The Low-backed Car.	Words by S. Lover. Music, Trad.	3
9. Boots (requested by many)	Kipling-McCall/Swan	3

If in order, Mr Dawson would like to announce his own programme

[stamp:] B.B.C. Accompanist [typed:] yes

For and on behalf of Peter Dawson,

Agent. September 25th 1936.

The timings are not exact; a similar letter⁴⁵ shows timing variations: *The Three Souls* (McCall), five minutes, *Lanagan's Dog* (Lohr), three and a half minutes, *Cells* (McCall), three and a half minutes. However, the timings do point to the acceptance that in general songs last approximately three to three and a half minutes.

Peter Dawson's request to announce his own songs⁴⁶ was most unusual; contrary to standard practice, and probably against Union rules. An announcer was always available to introduce items: the title of the song, probably the composer and a little information, to catch the attention of the listener. But Peter Dawson, who had this habit from his concerts, was convinced that he had a particular knack which was missing in the standard announcers; that they were too matter-of-fact. He was convinced that his

⁴²detail Chapter 3 - part 2, broadcast royalties 1933

⁴³BBC, 1936, 01.04

⁴⁴BBC, 1936, 11.03

⁴⁵BBC, 1937, 04.07

⁴⁶BBC, 1937, 04.07

introductions lifted the quality of the programme for his listening audience, that they personalised his programmes much more. As the BBC acquiesced, it was clearly in the interest of public relations to keep the old stager happy by letting him have his own way.⁴⁷

Peter Dawson had had a 'Film & Television clause' in his recording contract since 1931.⁴⁸ Although television was only introduced into Australia in time for the 1956 Olympic games in Melbourne, it was introduced to the British public on 26 August, 1936, 'Transmitted by the Baird System; programme specially arranged for reception at *Radiolympia*':⁴⁹

From Aug 26 until Sept 5 1936 high definition Television programmes, specially arranged for reception at Radiolympia were transmitted from BBC Television station at Alexandra Palace, London, on week days ... Test transmissions were given from Oct 1 - Oct 28.

At the end of the first week, 4 September, Peter Dawson, who had been party to the beginning of several changes in the industry, was televised. The programme of Friday, 28 August included a repeat of the programme from 26 August, the first day of transmission; 'TV 4.31-6.34 Fri Sept 4 1936 repeat programme of Aug 28 omitting film "First a Give" and incl: Peter Dawson (Bar.)'

The BBC began regular television broadcasts but for the moment Peter Dawson was excluded. Whether he had expected to be engaged for television after the *Radiolympia* appearance and had suffered some sort of rebuff could not be determined, but a fracas of some sort was simmering, for BBC TV responded:⁵⁰

we do not under any circumstances propose making a sound apology about Peter Dawson. The dispute is not ours, and if he would be reasonable about fee, we would be glad to give him a date ...

so while Peter Dawson continued to present substantial programmes on radio through 1937, including a recital on the Coronation Day of George VI,⁵¹ the television question was not resolved until a year later. Organisations were inclined to accommodate his personal idiosyncrasies as part of the package. What may appear to have been growing paranoia, turns out to be squabbles about money. Anecdotal remarks vary from 'he was known to be the highest paid artist in Australia' to 'he was always paid double the fee received by anyone else'.

Both English and Australian broadcasters had to work to departmental budgets; they were out to get the best value at the least cost. Peter Dawson, either personally or through his brother-in-law, made fee demands which were in excess of the standard. The fact that the companies paid him these fees is an indication of his standing in their eyes as a potential audience

⁴⁷the habit continued until his very last broadcasts.

⁴⁸referred to in Chapter 3 - part 2, 1931

⁴⁹BBC, 1936, 08.26

⁵⁰BBC, 1937, 02.17

⁵¹BBC, 1937, 05.12

winner. The fact that it continued into old age, when there was general acknowledgement that his songs were old fashioned, is an indication of the residual value placed on the mature artist.

To get into television he had to make a compromise. By January 1938⁵² the matter was resolved: 'his sound broadcast fee is 40 guineas, but he will be available to us at 25 guineas', so in March⁵³ a contract was issued for a *Music Makers* programme on 25 May: '£50 for two performances (with orchestra)'. The young tyros of television probably felt that a fifty-six year old ballad singer was an anachronism; *Variety Verdict* put them straight:⁵⁴

Week-end listening: They don't call it Music Hall any more. They call it "Straight Variety". All I propose to say about Saturday's edition is that the straight part of it - meaning Peter Dawson - had more appeal for me than the variety.

When he returned to Australia in 1939 interviewers were agog to hear about his experiences in this new medium. He was not very sanguine:⁵⁵ motion pictures were suffering; he believed it would make the plight of performers worse; aspirants would need 'an attractive personal appearance' and sound financial backing for 'tuition and waiting time'; in any case, there was 'room nowadays only for a few supreme artists at the top'. Personally, it was the 'most awful experience he had ever suffered':

"You are being photographed and at the same time have to be letter perfect, conscious the whole time of glaring lights and many technicians on all fours around you. The heat is enough to boil you. The band is a little distance away, but the conductor cannot hear you, and has to rely on lip-reading. It is dreadful, and I hope I do not have to go through it again."

But whatever he thought of television, most radio programmes he suggested were accepted,⁵⁶ the last typical programme being on 8 May, 1938, nearly a year before his return to Australia.⁵⁷ As there is no evidence to suggest that the BBC had lost interest in his suggestions, it could be concluded that he was on tour and unavailable. There is some evidence to support this proposition: apart from the concert programme from 1938 and that of 1 March, 1939,⁵⁸ a PDAS correspondent⁵⁹ recalls a *Saturday Night Celebrity Concert* at the Central Hall, Coventry c1938 and particularly remembers *The Erl King* and *I travel the Road*. J. Francis Barron, author of a number of Peter Dawson's compositions, was advised that Peter Dawson had sung 'your new number *Old Kettledrum*' and 'also sang *Fret Foot*' in Plymouth 'last Wednesday',⁶⁰ which indicates not only where he was but

⁵²BBC, 1938, 01.14

⁵³BBC, 1938, 03.22; BBC, 1938, 05.21

⁵⁴London newspaper, 1938, 07.11

⁵⁵Adelaide newspaper, 1939, 05.24; 1939, 06.04

⁵⁶BBC, 1938, 03.25: his suggestion for a programme of Scottish songs considered ineffectual

⁵⁷BBC, 1938.05.08

⁵⁸referred to in Chapter 4

⁵⁹Richardson, J. R., 1983, 05.07

⁶⁰J. Coffin, of Moons 'The Centre of Music' Plymouth, 1938, 03, 25. therefore between 18-24 March. *Old Kettledrum*, music J.P. McCall, words: J. Francis Barron, Boosey, London, 1938;

also that Peter Dawson had introduced these songs in the name of the author, not as J. P. McCall; and, because Peter Dawson had gone to Scotland,⁶¹ Barron himself wrote to Peter Dawson on 9 May beginning:⁶² 'first let me say how splendidly every word and inflection came over in yesterday's broadcast. *Edward* especially was a revelation as none of the family circle had heard it before'; which indicates that he had left after the last identified broadcast.⁶³

The BBC heard nothing of Peter Dawson again until early 1947⁶⁴, when the impresario, Harold Fielding, advised management that he would return in September and that he was still interested in radio and television engagements. As he had been 'out of the country for some six or seven years' his age and ability came into question ('pretty lusty old age by now'). In order to respond to Fielding it was decided to check his capabilities with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The information must have been positive because the wheels were set in motion for an appearance in the television show, *Music Makers*, on 3 September 1947.

First there was a funding allocation:⁶⁵ 'you have been allocated 50 guineas to cover one performance of Peter Dawson on 3rd September 1947', with an appended paragraph: 'for everything' - not very realistic if that included artist, orchestra, conductor, for rehearsals and performance, if Peter Dawson's broadcast fee had been 40 guineas before the War. In a later record the 50 guineas was allocated to Peter Dawson⁶⁶, whilst the accompanist, Ernest Lush, was to receive £25 for the 'Peter Dawson 10' solo spot'.⁶⁷

His arrival in London was reported on 26 August.⁶⁸ At about the same time the *Radio Times*, under the headline *Ten Million Voice*, advised readers that 'his first public assignment on landing in this country on a return visit from his native Australia' was 'to bewitch us for fifty minutes on television'.⁶⁹ Fifty minutes - a television hour - is a long programme. Either he was interviewed and sang or was only a part of the programme, for his ten-minute solo spot was actually fourteen minutes long, from '21.44 → 21.58'. The programme submitted by Peter Dawson as copied onto the television information sheet:⁷⁰

Play-in "Boots"	J. P. McCall	Swan	25 secs
I heard a forest praying	Peter de Rose	Chappell	2.30
Pride of Tipperary	Lockhead	Chappell	2.12
Arrow and the Song	Balfe	Boosey	2.50
Give me the spice of life	Michael North	Chappell	2.37
Changing of the Guard	Peter Maurice	Peter Maurice	2.33

Fret Foot, music J. P. McCall, words J. Francis Barron, Prowse, London, 1938

⁶¹Barron, 1938, 05.09: 'understanding from your good wife that you had gone to Scotland'

⁶²Barron, 1938, 05.09

⁶³BBC, 1938, 05.08.

⁶⁴BBC, 1947, 05.22

⁶⁵BBC, 1947, 08.11

⁶⁶BBC, 1947, 09.03

⁶⁷BBC, 1947, 07.21

⁶⁸London evening newspaper, 1947, 08.26

⁶⁹BBC, 1947, 09.00, *Radio Times*

⁷⁰BBC, 1947, 09.04: Television (Music): *Music Makers*; Contract date: 22.07.47; Recording Date: 04.09.47; Peter Dawson accompanied by Ernest Lush.

Peter Dawson's tour commitment lasted until the end of 1948; the only broadcasting contract during this period was in May, 1948, Doris Arnold's *Favourites from his Repertoire*.⁷¹ An undated handwritten draft programme, obviously for broadcasting of some sort, because it has exact timings, lasts twenty-four and a half minutes, and is marked 'Empire 7.15-7.45'. It could relate to this period or to 1938/39. The repertoire is familiar ballads, concluding with two of his own compositions, *Westward Ho!* as Charles Weber! and *Heart o the' Romany Rye*, no composer.

As TV was known to be popular in America and Europe, when he and Nan returned home he was quizzed about it again,⁷² for the public would have been expecting an announcement that it would soon be introduced into Australia. All 'London was being wired for television' and sets were selling 'for about £50', he said. He had taken part in a television programme 'for 30 minutes' and had sung 'ballads, opera excerpts, and oratorio'⁷³. Television was not to every performers liking, in fact, 'some artists refuse to be televised because of the strain involved from the heat of the great arc lights and facing moving cameras'.

This 1949 *ABC Weekly* biography mentions that he sang on '12 consecutive Sundays in a 30-minute programme for the BBC in Doris Arnold's Show'. Some confusion may be forgiven, for the reference to Doris Arnold in his autobiography reads:⁷⁴

The greatest and most pleasing success I achieved in a broadcast programme was the series in 1950 called "Our Pleasure to Present". The first programme was on Sunday, 4 July, and the twelfth on 19 September.

and each programme is listed in an Appendix.

When Peter Dawson returned for the 1950 tour, he could hardly have expected such a positive response from the BBC to be repeated. It was quite logical to invite the vocal peer to sing *Waltzing Matilda* on *Australia Calls* on Australia Day. As he claimed to be doing the tour because he was broke,⁷⁵ the 75 guineas⁷⁶ he was paid must have been handy. For most of the other programmes during this tour the fee remained at the old 50 guineas.

Peter Dawson has allocated the Doris Arnold programmes to this tour, but they surely belong to the previous tour, because one has been sighted there, and her name is not mentioned among the exceptional number of contracts on this tour. In February he was invited to sing on *Grand Hotel*: 'four songs', 'orchestra, piano, orchestra, piano, this last song is usually a new ballad', 'as details printed in *Radio Times* list asap'. On 29 March he pre-recorded for Sunday 9 April.⁷⁷

⁷¹BBC, 1948, 05.17

⁷²newspaper, 1949, 02.05, *The ABC Weekly*.

⁷³ref programme above

⁷⁴Dawson, 1951, 149 and Appendix II, 222-224. (author's note) At this point there may appear to have been some omission in the BBC search but in fact the BBC files on Peter Dawson are incomplete at this point.

⁷⁵London newspaper, 1950, 03.26

⁷⁶BBC, 1950, 01.24, 1950, 01.26. 1996 £475, c\$A1200

⁷⁷BBC, 1950, 04.09

1	<i>Ruddier than the cherry</i>	(orch)	Handel	Bb	Cramer
2	<i>The Fairy Lough</i>	(piano)	Stanford	D	Boosey
3	<i>Old Father Thames</i>	(orch)	O'Hagan	Bb	Wright
4	<i>The Garden of Allah</i>	(piano)	Charles Marshall	Bb	Boosey

Grand Hotel was sandwiched in among weekly commitments to *Rainbow Room* from 20 February to 1 May.⁷⁸ Although the actual programmes have not been sighted, he must have sung his usual ballads to a live audience in the 'Rainbow Room', actually the Concert Hall at the BBC,⁷⁹ because he sent a double ticket to one of the EMI executives. That he introduced his material in his usual fashion and delivered the pieces with the usual histrionics may be conclude from the note of appreciation:⁸⁰ 'we enjoyed it immensely - particularly the Maori song, during which I was strongly tempted to jump up and "whoop" with you'.

Between May and August he must have been in the provinces, for there was only one more contract: the night after the last *Rainbow Room* performance he shared *Henry Hall's Guest Night* with composer Billy Mayerl⁸¹ and sang two of the composer's songs, *Resting* and *The Portsmouth Road*, which he must have learned for the occasion.

To judge by the number of programmes, Fielding must have been a good intermediary and Peter Dawson must have delivered the goods. BBC management must have been convinced that there was still a sizeable audience for Peter Dawson material, or at least Peter Dawson material sung by Peter Dawson. Peter Dawson's antenna was also sensitive to his current status. A month after *Henry Hall's Guest Night* management had begun discussing an idea put forward by Peter Dawson: 'a series of 10 programmes under the title "Songs I Have Sung" covering years 1900-1950 (5 years per programme)'⁸². The initial response by the Light Programme was cautious interest,⁸³ but a week later a plan had been drafted. The plan was for ten programmes, each covering five years, as suggested; each programme would consist of 'songs associated with Peter Dawson and, in some cases, made popular by him'. Peter Dawson wanted to pre-record the programmes, so to ensure there were no problems with the Musicians Union it was essential that Peter Dawson be out of the country when they were broadcast. It was agreed that the programmes would be kept 'under lock and key so that other Services may not preempt & therefore invalidate', until the Festival of Britain in 1951.⁸⁴

As these ten programmes had had the desired effect the question of a similar series was raised when Peter Dawson was expected to return in 1953, and a costing of *Fifty Years of Song* was prepared. When the accountants

⁷⁸BBC, 1950, 02.20 to 1950, 05.01, eleven programmes. On the assumption that one programme could have been missed in the research, there was a temptation to rhyme these with the 12 programmes he credited to Doris Arnold, but the named producer was Campbell Ricketts.

⁷⁹EMI, 1959, 03.30

⁸⁰EMI, 1950, 04.05

⁸¹BBC, 1950, 05.02 for BBC, 1950, 05.10 'To take part in the above with Billy Mayerl'

⁸²BBC, 1950, 06.08. In 1953 (BBC, 1953, 03.03) Tom Noble claimed that it was his idea. Sounds feasible

⁸³BBC, 1950, 06.06: 'not right as it stands'

⁸⁴BBC, 1950, 06.13, 16

turned to the previous records it was revealed that 'the previous allocation was rather high, namely £160'.⁸⁵ Broken down the 'average cost [was] £155 per programme depending on number of new orchestrations required'. The unknown factor was the 'number of new orchestrations required for some of the old-fashioned songs he sang and for which music was not available'. The known costs are revealing:⁸⁶

Peter Dawson	52.10.0
Freddy Grisewood	12.12.0
Louis Voss Orchestra of 22	⁸⁷ 70.10.0
+ orchestrations	6.00.0
	141.12.0

From the twenty-four BBC contracts listed for 1950 Peter Dawson earned £1338.15.0⁸⁸ and would earn a residual income if any programmes were repeated or broadcast overseas.⁸⁹

The serious business of sorting out the programmes and recording them started at the beginning of August and ran through to 4 October. The old warhorse would sometimes record three days in a row. The repertoire was so familiar it probably sang itself. Though both the conductor, Louis Voss, and the presenter, Freddy Grisewood, were names well known to British - and Australian - audiences at the time, Peter Dawson maintained his policy of interlacing anecdotes into the programmes himself.⁹⁰ Unwittingly he was building a monument to himself. If BBC officials in 1953 found some of the music old-fashioned, the public did not. Here was the Peter Dawson they had always known; here were the songs they had indelibly associated with him for a lifetime. But more than that, the programmes were a personal summation of his life: the completed ten programmes have not been identified, but the four which he submitted will suffice to demonstrate that the fifty songs he deliberately chose represent, quite categorically, his personal musical taste and vision:

1st Programme		
1	<i>O ruddier than the cherry</i>	Handel B ^b
2	<i>To Anthea</i>	J. L. Hatton B ^b
3	<i>Tis I</i>	Pinsuti G
4	<i>Simon the Cellarer</i>	J. L. Hatton C
5	<i>Sincerity</i>	Emilie Clarke D ^b

⁸⁵BBC, 1953, 04.30, 05.04

⁸⁶and support earlier assertions about Peter Dawson's remuneration vis-à-vis others.

⁸⁷As there is no named cost for Louis Voss it is presumably included in the orchestral cost and would be at least as much as Freddy Grisewood - which does not leave much for each orchestral player, who would earn about half as much for the whole series as Peter Dawson for one programme.

⁸⁸21 x 50 guineas + 3 x 75 guineas = 1275 guineas (£1338.15.0) = 1996c.£8000, c.\$A20000

⁸⁹standard clause: pre-record "Fifty Years of Song": Special 50 guineas; Mechanical rights 25 guineas; Mech Overseas 10 guineas; Subsequent Reproduction 5 guineas

⁹⁰London newspaper 1955, 08.26, 'A Mighty Man of Song', *Radio Times*: 'He told us scores of rattling good stories in his broadcast series, *Fifty Years of Song*.'

2nd Programme

1	<i>The Arrow and the Song</i>	Balfe	A ^b
2	<i>Anchored</i>	Michael Watson	G
3	<i>Myself when young</i>	Liza Lehmann	F
4	<i>The Skewball Black</i>	Liza Lehmann	A ^b
5	<i>Invictus</i>	Bruno Huhn	A

9th Programme

1	<i>Fret Foot</i>	McCall	Am
2	<i>Your Voice Beloved</i>	Stanton Jeffries	A ^b
3	<i>Cells</i>	McCall	E ^b
4	<i>Nut Brown Ale</i>	Alan Murray	G
5	<i>Waltzing Matilda</i>	Marie Cowan	D ^b

10th Programme

1	<i>Westward Ho!</i>	J. P. McCall	Gm
2	<i>Gentleman Jim</i>	Jim Oliver	Cm
3	<i>Dream one more dream</i>	Alba Rizzi	B ^b
4	<i>McPherson's Farewell</i>	J. P. McCall	Fm
5	<i>Largo al factotum</i>	Rossini	B ^b

As much of Peter Dawson's music had been virtually out of circulation for almost two decades, the decision to undertake this retrospective series must have been strongly supported by someone within the organisation, someone who had a strong instinct for the music and had the power to invoke authority. That person was none other than L. Stanton Jeffries,⁹¹ one of the accompanists for that first Australia Day broadcast in 1923. Two weeks after the last recording a letter to Jeffries indicates that Peter Dawson and Nan were on the *Orcades* somewhere in the Indian Ocean.⁹² 'Jiffy old pal' and some ribald remarks⁹³ indicate their long-standing familiarity. The idea of repeating the series in Australia must have been in Peter Dawson's mind, when he requested the orchestration of *Lament of Shah Jehan* and 'that lovely song *Your Voice Beloved*', Jeffries own composition, which appeared in the ninth programme.

The programmes were broadcast weekly, on Sundays at 3.30, from 6 May⁹⁴ - 8 July. Their reception?⁹⁵

Fifty Years of Song. Peter Dawson's first big radio comeback, which proves (a) that he is still in magnificent voice; (b) that the old ballads still have the power to bring a blink to the eye; (c) that here, if anywhere, is a singer worthy of a regular series.

More of Mr Dawson please.

When Nan died on 31 January, 1953, Tom Noble got it into his head that Peter Dawson would soon be back in England and had approached Stanton Jeffries with the suggestion of a new series already in March.⁹⁶ The BBC did

⁹¹ programme information ends up on his desk in several memos, eg BBC, 1950, 10.03.

⁹² Dawson, 1950, 10.19, hw to L. Stanton Jeffries

⁹³ see Appendix 3: Anecdotes

⁹⁴ beginning from 1953 costing weekly would be: May 6, 13, 20, 27, June 3, 10, 17, 24, July 1, 8

⁹⁵ London newspaper, 1951, 05.17

⁹⁶ BBC, 1953, 03.03

not reject the idea but again prudently sought the opinion of the ABC on both Peter Dawson's state of mind after the death of his wife, and his standard of singing.⁹⁷ The response from W. G. James, Director of Music, Australian Broadcasting Commission (Sydney) was considered encouraging:⁹⁸

This artist's voice retains much of its old resonance and is still an excellent broadcasting organ, although it is noticeable that his top notes are becoming a trifle thin, which is only to be expected in a man of his age.[71] I understand that in public recitals recently his memory failed him on one or two occasions; other than that, the reports of his work have been good.

Considering that the Director of Music was a composer, whose songs Peter Dawson had recorded and had been his accompanist in Australia and England on a number of occasions, the assessment appears very objective. It gave a prognosis upon which the BBC could make its own decisions. The idea of six half hours with the London Light Concert Orchestra conducted by Stanford Robinson and presented again by Freddy Grisewood, was floated and costed, and dragged on until September when Harold Fielding finally advised that he could not 'prepare a plan attractive enough to invite Peter Dawson to this country during the coming autumn and winter to make a farewell tour'.⁹⁹ As his voice did not deteriorate further, the file from 1953 when 'the idea was "hot" ' was re-opened when the BBC knew that Peter Dawson would return in December, 1954.

Although Harold Fielding put his name forward for the end of year *Proms* because he thought they had 'arrived for a year's stay',¹⁰⁰ Peter Dawson and Constance arrived in December and left again in May. Was touring really becoming too debilitating? Or was Peter Dawson becoming fed up? Despite the evidence of Fielding's enquiries, Peter Dawson was probably a hard product to sell at that stage of his life, yet the upshot of his six-month stay was two television appearances, four pre-recorded recitals and a talk.

The first television appearance was on the David Nixon Show, *Home & Dry*, to celebrate Australia Day. At a rehearsal two days before, he fell down the entrance stairs. The commissaire helped him up, he was 'taken to surgery, put to bed, treated for shock, examined by Dr Rosefield. Advised to go home to bed. Special capsule given to take later, also advised to call in own doctor before appearing on Television on Wednesday'¹⁰¹. He must have tried to hold the Corporation¹⁰² culpable but it concluded that the steps were 'not in any way dangerous, and the fact that Mr Dawson fell down them can be attributed only to his own carelessness'. Notwithstanding, in a later reference to the programme: 'a highlight of his seven-month English tour had been his appearance in the Australia Day show'.¹⁰³

⁹⁷BBC, 1953, 03.11, 20

⁹⁸BBC, 1953, 04.16

⁹⁹BBC, 1953, 09.18

¹⁰⁰BBC, 1955, 01.26

¹⁰¹BBC, 1955, 01.25, Accident Report

¹⁰²BBC, 1955, 02.17. originally Company, now referred to a Corporation

¹⁰³Adelaide newspaper, 1955, 06,08

'The 'Talk' on 12 April was an unscripted interview at the Commonwealth Club for the General Overseas Service for the notional sum of 5 guineas, as opposed to his continuing 50 guineas for recitals. The recitals, *These Radio Times*, were pre-recorded in March and April¹⁰⁴ with the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Charles Mackerras. The programmes must have included the *Mandalay Scena*, because Mackerras borrowed the BBC orchestration for the EMI recording; and from correspondence:¹⁰⁵

BBC series ended last night ... programme before included *Waltzing Matilda* and *Snow Bird* ... last night *Boots* Dollie said, "He has not sung "Boots" in any of the series and, lo and behold "Boots" came through as the last number, as only Peter can sing it.'

Peter Dawson's exit performance was the television show *Music for You* on 25 April.¹⁰⁶ If the Corporation was treading on egg shells after the Australia Day incident, it need not have worried, for next day Cyril Aynsley's *TV viewpoint* read:¹⁰⁷

Old Father Dawson puts life in TV

It took the 73-year-old Australia baritone Peter Dawson to put life and vitality into last night's TV programme "Music for You". Until he appeared it had threatened to die of a palsy brought on by a series of old English songs presented against a phoney Olde English background. On came Peter Dawson with "The Floral Dance" and the inevitable "Road To Mandalay." Straightforward, bustling, honest-to-goodness stuff, bringing red blood to what, until then, had been an anaemic programme.

a television viewpoint echoed in 'the 73-year old dished out his practically forgotten style of music and caused a sensation again', and:

Peter Dawson, veteran bass-baritone, sturdy as a sea-captain, sat on a hard, high-backed chair and waved me to cushioned ease. He was still aglow from the success on TV's Music For You programme last Monday, when he outpersonalited everybody within reach. He sang *Road To Mandalay* and *The Floral Dance* with the rollicking confidence of a man who had spent a decade before the TV cameras. Actually he did not make his TV debut until the eve of his 73rd birthday three months ago.

"Compared with the concert platform," he says, "I find studio conditions a bit trying - all those strong lights, all those cables on the floor, having to toe all those lines. Still viewers seemed to like it. You ought to see the fan mail I'm getting."

'He sails a fortnight hence to semi-retreat in his native Australia, but will be back here for a farewell tour lasting most of 1956.'

Communications between departments at the BBC must have been vague for he was invited to participate in a talks programme in August and again in December; but the bird had flown the coop for ever. He had left 'four programmes of songs, introduced by his old friend Freddy Grisewood' and

¹⁰⁴BBC, 1955, 03.07 - 04.15

¹⁰⁵Eastman, Walter (of publisher Asherwood, Hopwood & Crew), 1955.10.05

¹⁰⁶BBC, 195, 04.25

¹⁰⁷London newspapers, 1955.04.26

an epitaph:¹⁰⁸

he contrived to make one of the most talked-of television appearances this year. In fact, though in a sense he belongs to the past, this sturdy, indomitable, and apparently ageless singer is also astonishingly and delightfully of the present.

¹⁰⁸London newspaper, 1955, 08,26

Chapter 5

Broadcasting Part 2: ABC 1932-1961

A review of Peter Dawson's association with the Australian Broadcasting Commission gives a completely different insight into the character of the artist.¹

As most of the generation who still feel attached to Peter Dawson's repertoire would have heard him during their childhood in the thirties or during World War 2, their first contact with him would have been through records or radio. His voice could be heard as prolifically on commercial stations as on the ABC.

When radio was to be established in Australia the effects of the Depression had bitten cruelly into the economy. With surprising political perspicacity the Australian Government copied the innovative foresight of the motherland by setting up an independent, non-commercial national broadcaster. In 1932 the government-funded Australian Broadcasting Commission began broadcasting; by the late seventies:²

[its] seven orchestras [gave] a total of about 750 concerts annually, making the ABC one of the biggest concert enterprises in the world. 25% of broadcast time [was] occupied with serious music. The ABC commissions new works, and about 10% of broadcast music is contemporary.

Apart from its reporting of current affairs, sport, and any other matter which touched the lives of Australians, the Australian Broadcasting Commission became a dominant force in Australian culture, both for its development of indigenous drama and music, and its presentation of overseas musicians and conductors. The early establishment of orchestras in each State and local studio recitals activated a public musical culture, which was singularly fruitful. In Peter Dawson's home town, for example, when 'the depression reached its nadir in 1931 musical life in South Australia was hit particularly hard':³

Serious orchestral music, especially, did not really recover until the Australian Broadcasting Commission undertook the establishment of a studio orchestra ... in 1934. The players came, in the main, from the local cinema orchestras which were closing down after the introduction of talking pictures.

Because Australians regarded themselves essentially as Anglo-Saxon during Peter Dawson's lifetime, their culture was the European culture devolved

¹The original draft of this chapter came principally from documents in NFSA, MS5030: Peter Dawson, A guide to his papers. It is now coupled with a detailed search of ABC: Peter Dawson files held by Australian Archives CRS: SP 368/1, 7/18/2, Box 4, ABC 1938-1969; press files: SP1011/2, Box 27, Job 10946/96, 303/6/3/33 [ABC/AA]

²Goslich, S., 'Broadcasting [(radio) Australia]' in *New Grove*, 1980

³Szuster, J. 'Concert Life in Adelaide', 185, in McCredie, A. (ed), 1988, *From Colonel Light into the Footlights*

from Great Britain, but, because of its position, Australia remained outside the orbit of Northern Hemisphere trends. Seasonal differences, together with the enormous distance which separated Australians from their cultural base, meant that fashions were at least six months behind Europe. Australians remained conservative; they held on to what they knew and trusted. Only the two wars forced Australians into mainstream immediacy for a while.

Music was no different. While there were always a few intrepid souls who felt compelled to try their fortunes in the capital of the world, most musicians lacked the incentive to make the journey - largely a matter of cost. This Australian perspective did not change significantly until after the Second World War, following the presence of American soldiers in Australia and Australian soldiers returning from Europe and the Pacific. After the War jobs were plentiful so more and more young people could find the fare to England: international tourism - 'Europe on 10/- a day' - became realistic, and a new 'Down Under Club'⁴ culture developed around temporarily expatriate Australians in London. Among them were musicians willing to embrace changes as radical as Schoenberg's twelve-tone theory and practice, which had caused a furore initially in 1911,⁵ but was not taught in Australian music teaching institutions until the late 'forties.

However, Peter Dawson did not represent these radical values; on the contrary, his appeal lay in the confirmation of pre-war, conservative taste. When he sang *There'll Always be an England* on his 1939 Cinema Tour⁶ the audience could have sung it with him as reverently as *God Save the King*.

Although the Australian broadcaster was gradually expanding into a national monolith, Peter Dawson does not appear to have been involved with it directly until 1943. His tours of Australia had been organised by other managements under exclusive appearance contracts. Even the 1939 tour for Greater Union Theatres was on an exclusivity basis. Peter Dawson's understanding that he would begin the 1939 *Celebrity Series* was rejected by the ABC. His press comments indicate that he was most insulted by the breach; the two parties appeared irreconcilable. But Peter Dawson was a professional singer who could command high fees; and he did not sit at home 'waiting for the telephone to ring'. It was his practice to contact those he knew, whether he wanted another performance or wanted his compositions published. Finding work was a two-way street; if the work did not find him, he would find the work. He could vent his spleen, but once the frustration was out of his system, he resorted to his usual bluff amiable self: he had temperament but was practical.

The ABC was not the only broadcaster. If one avenue was closed, another

⁴*Down Under Club* in Earls Court was the first point of contact for many Australian and New Zealanders in the fifties. A meeting place, cheap accommodation advertised, the beginnings of the back-packer phenomenon.

⁵examples by Schoenberg, Webern, Berg contained in the catalogue of the Expressionist *Der Blaue Reiter* exhibition in Munich 1911

⁶Neate, 1984, 06.14 op. cit.

was open. There are recordings from September 1941,⁷ of *Stout Hearted Men* from Romberg's *New Moon*, and Flotsam and Jetsam's⁸, *The Changing of the Guard* with the 'AWA Light Opera Co', which indicates that other stations could afford an orchestra and chorus in those days. Most Australians would pick up their classical music as an adjunct to other more popular music in this style of programme. ABC programmes were too esoteric for most.

Nevertheless, it was the national broadcaster and, as such, a principal outlet for Australian wartime sentiment, so, as Peter Dawson willingly used his position for propaganda, it was natural that he should gravitate into its orbit, and 'gradually the ABC began to play a major role in his concert and broadcasting life.'⁹ In May, 1943, the ABC advertised¹⁰ two national Peter Dawson programmes: *Out of the Bag* on Monday evenings and *Peter Dawson's Ballad Album* on Thursday evenings, supported by a photograph of the singer in apron and straw hat, with the sub-script 'Peter Dawson digs for victory in his spare time'.

How productive was his association with the national broadcaster? The suspicion that all was not plain sailing surfaces in a personal sketch he made of the ABC sitting on a tree and sawing off the branch marked 'Australian Artists'.¹¹ The War had ended, so it could be hypothesised that when the first batch of international artists was being invited, Peter Dawson was not included among the 'celebrities'. An ABC tour did not eventuate until 1949.

The investigation of internal ABC files revealed that the story of Peter Dawson's association with the ABC was indeed a torrid one, at least until the end of the War. The ABC was managed by Charles Moses, an excellent administrator, to whom most responsibility can be credited for building the ABC into a powerful cultural tool from its infant beginnings as radio, to the development of its orchestras, through to the ABC as partner in the Sydney Opera House concept and the introduction of television. The thirty-five year old Federal Talks Organiser - 'tall, powerful, handsome, charming and English' - was appointed General Manager on 30 October 1935.¹² With the exception of his wartime service (November 1940 - February 1943) as a high-ranking officer,¹³ Moses literally ruled the ABC during Peter Dawson's association with the Commission.

He had instituted a strict centralised administrative hierarchy: in the case of serious music an idea was *recommended* by the Federal Director of Music, *endorsed* by the Federal Controller of Programmes, and finally *approved* by the General Manager.¹⁴ Charles Moses delegated the work, but the common

⁷Burgis, 1981, 'information booklet' in *Ambassador of Song*

⁸Hilliam and Australian bass Malcolm McEachern, old friends of Peter Dawson, who also sang at Gaisberg's retirement

⁹from Chapter 4

¹⁰Sydney newspaper, 1943. 05.22

¹¹Dawson, 1945, 12.31

¹²Inglis, 1983, 45

¹³Inglis, 109: returned as Lt.Colonel

¹⁴example from ABC/AA 1951, 08.09. the information was also passed to other departments such as Publicity, Finance. In the case of 'Variety' the recommendation came from the

parlance was, that 'everything went over his desk'.¹⁵

Peter Dawson created the impression that the ABC had chased him, then gone back on its promise. The ABC saw it differently. Peter Dawson's name appears in the files in 1936. Although his attempts to organise a tour to USA never succeeded an agent recommended him to the ABC:¹⁶

Have also had several talks with Dawson in regard to a tour through America and Canada next year. D is interested in the formation of a new and novel feature for broadcasting ... much more to offer than just his grand and inimitable repertoire of ballads. He is still the Unquestioned Ballad singer and singer to and of the people.

so the idea of visiting Australasia again had surfaced long before 1939. It must be assumed that the ABC had put out feelers in 1938 for a letter from Peter Dawson, sent through his friend, the Australian Manager of Chappell's, Ernest Lashmar,¹⁷ had been tabled at a Music Sub-Committee meeting, chaired by the Federal Director of Music, another friend of long-standing, the composer William James.¹⁸ 'This letter was a response a 'letter just received from Mr Moses in reference to 1939'.¹⁹

My dear Ernest

A comprehensive fee to include two radio performances and one public concert a week appeals to me. I do not want to have to leave the country at the termination of an ABC contract but to remain indefinitely, which would mean that the ABC would only be required to pay steamship fares one way. I also take it the ABC pay transport throughout the life of the contract; rail and steamship fares. A reasonable time be granted to me after I complete the ABC contract ere I negotiate any new appearances.

I am keen upon the 1939 Australian visit after a lapse of six years.

I suggest a fee of £300 per week English; twelve week minimum guarantee.²⁰

The Music Sub-Committee found this 'minimum guarantee excessive.' In response it suggested an offer 'for public concerts £50 sterling per or 40% of the gross takings whichever is the larger'; studio: £25 sterling per appearance' which would amount to £100 per week for one concert plus two studio recitals. 'On the other hand, if it were decided to give a series of

Federal Director of Variety.

¹⁵1996, 12.00: information from author's conversation with employee who had worked in this era.

¹⁶ABC/AA, 1936, 06, 15

¹⁷Like the use of his brother-in-law in England, Peter Dawson had developed the habit of letting others speak for him initially; it occurs several times in dealings with the ABC.

¹⁸ABC/AA, Fed, Cont. Progs., 1940, 03.01b: 'James and he are very friendly, James being his accompanist from the age of fourteen and Dawson being intimately linked with his Bush Songs.'

¹⁹ABC/AA, 1938, 06.17a

²⁰to put the sum into a modern perspective: 1938 x £300 x 9.7 = 1996 £2900 pw = 1996 \$A 7000; 12 weeks 1938 = 3600, 1996\$A84000. To reiterate a former point, it is not possible to simply translate a sum from one period to the other: even after the war an income of £20 a week was above average; in 1938 terms that would only be c.\$20000 today, less if 1945-50; but it does emphasise Peter Dawson's high demands.

public concerts, similar to our other Celebrity Artists (ie Saturday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday) he would be paid on the basis as set out above £50 per'. With the codicil:

We feel that if Mr Dawson accepted a contract from the Commission and we paid his fare even one way, then he should give a guarantee that he will not appear under any other management in Australia inside six months from the completion of his contract. On the other hand, if Mr Dawson came to Australia at his own expense and accepted a contract with us, we feel that he should be free to negotiate at the end of his contract as he pleases.

On being advised of such a dramatic revision of Peter Dawson's proposal, Ernest Lashmar wisely withdrew as negotiator and left the ABC to deal directly with Peter Dawson in England. The General Manager then made the offer²¹ for a period of ten weeks with a guarantee 'of not less than twenty-five appearances' plus an option of extending for a further three weeks or more, over a period of ten weeks.

By November James could report to the General Manager that Lashmar had advised that Peter Dawson would accept the offer and as 'negotiations with John Charles Thomas for 1939 have fallen through'²² it was recommended that Peter Dawson be given the tour.

Because of his 'very large record public' it was felt that he was the ideal person to fulfil the ABC's commitment to country areas - 'such as Kalgoorlie, Broken Hill, Wollongong, Lismore' - as well as the capital cities. Another positive feature was that his repertoire was ideal for Military Band and the Wireless Chorus. By starting the tour in Perth in March he would not clash with the German diva, Lotte Lehmann, on the other side of the country, but finish after twelve weeks with a subscription concert in Brisbane on 1 June 'because extra players [will be] there for Lehmann on 6th'. The final offer contained in the fateful letter of 10 December, 1938 was a substantial package of 31 solo recitals plus one orchestral concert within 12^{1/2} weeks. It seemed that everyone would benefit, the artist, the Commission and the public. Approving the proposal Moses had concluded:²³

Our artists for 1939 do not include any Australians, and for this reason, apart from the fact they would undoubtedly be a popular success, it is right that Peter Dawson should be engaged.

Before the final letter was either written or received the ABC needed action because it was getting very late for such a complex commitment early in the coming season. On 6 December the General Manager cabled Peter Dawson: CABLE IF ABLE COMMENCE TOUR SECOND WEEK MARCH WRITING MOSES, to which Peter Dawson replied the next day: CAN COMMENCE TOUR SECOND WEEK MAY. Moses responded the following day with: 1939 TOUR MUST BEGIN SECOND WEEK MARCH OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE. On 12th Peter Dawson riposted: CAN ARRIVE SYDNEY MARCH SIXTEEN BY

²¹ABC/AA, 1938, 08, 31

²²ABC/AA, 1938, 11.23

²³ABC/AA, 1938, 11.26

MOOLTAN PETER DAWSON. Three weeks later he sent another cable from Edgeware:²⁴ ITINERARY IMPOSSIBLE PETER DAWSON. But the ultimate rejection was first advised by Lashmar and later explained in Peter Dawson's letter of 6 January:

I understood that your cable dated 8th December [i. e. Moses' 'impossible'] held good. During the interim I made other commitments on this side, and then your letter arrived. ²⁵

Had Peter Dawson rejected the tour because it was too early in the year, because he felt that a tour of country town was beneath his dignity, or because he was relegated to an unimportant role in the Brisbane concert at a reduced fee,²⁶ while Lotte Lehmann was given the kid-glove treatment? Or had he simply received a better offer from Greater Union Theatres? Certain is that he publicly berated the ABC for their mishandling of the tour after the ABC had reacted negatively to his closing remark suggesting it offer him 'a tour during your 1940 season', more in keeping with his status. The ABC took such affront at Peter Dawson's position that it was stung to defend its position, because it had organised extensively in the belief that Peter Dawson was committed to it. The substance of the response was contained in a memorandum at the end of January, which became the official letter from Moses on 11 February, arguing that Peter Dawson just wanted to weasel out of the contract:²⁷

- suggest we advise arrangements for 1940, 1941 in hand and we cannot enter into negotiations with him;
- might advise that since he left Australia concert position has changed; number of successful tours with world famous artists have included Easter;
- remarks about orchestrals are absurd, not asked to do any more than Lehmann, Rethberg, Kipnis

The final letter began: 'We are frankly surprised'; expresses the concert position as 'The Commission has revolutionised concert giving in Australia. the season now February to November' and finishes with a polite 'we again express regret' but no possibility of a 1940 season.

If it had been anyone else the matter might have ended there, but the ABC had reckoned without the tetchy Peter Dawson and his standing in the community. The ABC had hardly reached London before an article headed: *Why Dawson is not coming* appeared in *Radio Call*,²⁸ which said he was not prepared to come because it involved too big a risk. One paragraph:

²⁴ABC/AA, 1939. 01.04

²⁵ABC/AA 1939, 01.10 cable: Lashmar advises your Australian tour cancelled please confirm

²⁶orchestral celebrity concert Brisbane 2 brackets approx 10 minutes each, only £25 because in subscription. PD reply 1939, 01.06: The Brisbane date ... out of the Question, not only from a remuneration angle but from the time allotted me in each half of the programme - eight to ten minutes is absurd

²⁷ABC/AA, 1939, 01.26: paraphrased

²⁸ABC/AA, 1939, 03.02

The cancellation of the tour at such a late stage gives support to the contention of other ABC Celebrity Artists that touring conditions in Australia are far too strenuous

particularly offended Charles Moses, who wrote to the Editor the following day: 'substance of the article caused me much surprise and concern - please publish my reply'. He contradicted 'strenuous', says the ABC was wrongly charged with 'bustling its artists' and to say that the Dawson itinerary from March - June was in the nature of a "lightning tour" was again a misrepresentation of the facts. 'Mr Dawson's only criticism' was concerts during Easter and 'that in his appearance with orchestra in Brisbane he should be permitted to sing in each half of the concert instead of making only one appearance'.

At the end of the month *Wireless Weekly* and *Radio Times*²⁹ announced that Peter Dawson had been signed up by the Sydney commercial station, 2UE, for at least three months, twice weekly, for a programme sponsored by a cigarette manufacturer. At the same time articles appeared in *The Herald*, *The Telegraph*, *The Weekly Times* and a number of other papers in which Peter Dawson aggressively rebutted the ABC response to the *Radio Call* article.³⁰

Dawson has flatly denied the statement by the Chairman of the ABC that he broke his contract: "There never was a contract. It wasn't finalised. I objected to the itinerary."

The substance of the press release can be found in the *Radio Times*:³¹ Peter Dawson ran down radio ('killing young artists'), ran down television, said the ABC had announced the tour 'a year ago' before contacting him, and that he could not take on the tour because he was 'booked up for a couple of years'. His most offensive line was that the ABC would 'have me running up and down the country like a smoothing iron'.

The Bulletin led with *Does A stand for Austrian?*: Peter Dawson was back 'but the ABC prefers foreigners', and 'the ABC can put up with a certain loss, for it lives off the proceeds of an excessive impost'.³²

All the more surprising to find that Greater Union Theatres subsequently enquired whether the ABC might like to broadcast some of their Peter Dawson concerts, and take over the return fare to England. But less surprising that the General Manager courteously confirmed his 'verbal intimation that the Commission has decided not to make any offer for broadcasts by Peter Dawson', to the cinema group and internally told his subordinates that he had 'no interest in any proposal to engage Peter Dawson'.³³

There was a lighter side: Peter Dawson could be as cantankerous as he liked

²⁹ABC/AA, 1939, 05.31; 06.03

³⁰ABC/AA, *Mail*, 1939, 06.10

³¹ABC/AA, 1939, 06.04

³²ABC/AA, 1939, 06.14 - but sounds suspiciously like Peter Dawson's language, i.e. he spoke to the press.

³³ABC/AA, 1939, 05.02; 09.28, 10.11.

with the ABC, but pontificating about American pop singers was:³⁴

Some Cheek

It is just like Peter Dawson's impudence to refer to Bing Crosby's crooning as mooing. It should be very interesting to hear Bing's opinion of Peter Dawson's singing. It might by a strange chance coincide with mine. I can't stand a bar of Peter Dawson. No doubt there are people who like Mr Dawson's voice, but I'll guarantee that if Mr Dawson was broadcasting from one station and Bing from another Bing would have a decidedly larger listening audience.

It could be expected that the K. S. Inglis authoritative *This is the ABC* (1983), would have dealt with such a public controversy, but Peter Dawson is as good as ignored. He is only mentioned once, *en passant*, towards the end of his life, as one of many guests taking part in a 'memories of Melba' programme. Does the omission indicate that Peter Dawson's continuous fractiousness was swept under the carpet, or simply that the writer had no interest in this particular artist? The book begins 'This is the ABC - as perceived by one listener, reader and writer' - not from the point of view of a casually employed singer; not from the point of view of a famous singer, used to being treated as a celebrity, used to being paid celebrity fees.

Although Moses remained understandable obdurate, some of his advisers could see value in revitalising a positive relationship with Peter Dawson. Gradually, between March and May 1940, Peter Dawson was reinstated. It was wartime. In March 1940 the Programming Committee, though well aware of Moses feelings,³⁵ suggested Peter Dawson for an Anzac Night feature, because:

Dawson was digger and it seemed to us that an appropriate night to affect a reconciliation ... would be Anzac Night. He would be a great feature in our Camp Concerts and on the popular side of our programmes. I think he will listen to reason.

Again Peter Dawson remained hidden behind another person, this time the cartoonist, Kerwin Maegraith,³⁶ who exchanged proposal and counter-proposals with William James. Peter Dawson's opening gambit was twelve studio broadcasts for £1000,³⁷ which the ABC found exorbitant. The ABC offered a combination of studio recitals, celebrity concerts, community concerts & public recitals for a total of £700 or a 13-week tour for circa £800. The negotiations were protracted, past Anzac Day: the next suitable date suggested was Empire Day, 24 May. Peter Dawson claimed he had a better offer from a commercial broadcaster but would settle for the ABC if the parties could agree. The ABC would not go beyond its 1938 offer. Just as Charles Moses decided that further negotiation was pointless, William

³⁴ABC/AA, 1939, 06.17: *Radio Times*, Letter to the Editor.

³⁵ABC/AA, 1940, 03.01: 'I know what you own feelings are on this matter and I was wondering if you might if you might think it worthwhile mentioning Dawson to the Commission again.'

³⁶was at 1931 *Good Companions* dinner in Adelaide; now resident in Sydney

³⁷1940 x £A1000 x 8.950 = 1996 £A8950 = \$A17900; £83.3 per x 8.950 x 2 = \$1490 per broadcast

James advised that Peter Dawson had agreed to ten studio broadcasts between May and September at £40 per. The press reported that:

Three more great singers sign contracts with ABC
Dawson Nash Natzke
Peter Dawson to broadcast Empire Day 24 May

When Peter Dawson heard that the *2nd Patriotic War Rally* in the Sydney Town Hall³⁸ was to be broadcast, he claimed it as one of the series. By August the contract had been completed, so Maegraith put forward a Peter Dawson proposal to tour North Queensland, then across to the AIF force in Darwin at £40 per show; on completion a further tour of concerts and broadcasts through Western Australia and South Australia, which would include many country centres.³⁹ Was Peter Dawson serious? The Touring Committee, recalling the 'smoothing iron' remarks, was 'astounded to hear these offers', but the ultimate official response was that, if Peter Dawson wanted to make such a tour under his own auspices, the ABC could arrange to broadcast some of his concerts.⁴⁰

There appears to have been no further direct contact for another year. Moses had departed; from November 1940 T. W. Bearup, an Australian, who had been Manager for Victoria when Moses was appointed G-M,⁴¹ now appears on the files as Acting General Manager.

The only indicator of Peter Dawson's activities was an enquiry from the New Zealand Broadcasting Commission. Peter Dawson had proposed a tour of one month, twelve broadcasts, for £1000 plus travelling costs for himself, his wife and his agent. While the proposal was excessive the NBS sought information about Peter Dawson's broadcast fee 'for rights to present him in a limited number of concerts to aid patriotic funds'.⁴²

In July 1941, Peter Dawson wrote to William James:

It is high time that I did some broadcasting, in order to hearten the denizens of our beloved Australia - will you put it up to "the powers that be" to allot me at least ten broadcasts or a tour throughout our Sister States? Assisted by the Military Band plus the ABC choir would, in my opinion, put real "pep" into the population and in no small way assist the workers to go all out for ultimate victory.

The official response was 'a minimum of 10 engagements over a 6 month period at fee of 15 guineas'.⁴³

This vastly reduced fee must have come as a surprise to Peter Dawson for his next gambit was a letter to the Prime Minister some months later,⁴⁴ suggesting that the ABC should not only use him as an artist but that 'some

³⁸ABC/AA, 1940, 05.28

³⁹ABC/AA, 1940, 08.24

⁴⁰ABC/AA, 1940, 07.30; 08.08

⁴¹Inglis, 45

⁴²ABC/AA, 1940, 11.22

⁴³ABC/AA. 1941, 08.26

⁴⁴ABC/AA, 1942, 01.07

useful position could be found for me in connection with the activities of the Australian Broadcasting Commission'. Bearup's response to a follow-up from the Postmaster-General was:⁴⁵ 'statements have appeared in the press from time to time inferring that the Commission has neglected Mr Dawson', but when the Lord Mayor of Sydney had requested the ABC to broadcast a patriotic concert, Peter Dawson was 'the only artist who asked for a fee, a heavy £40'. Further, the response continued, the ABC had recently offered him a contract for the patriotic feature *Searchlight over London* but had had no response to date. It concluded: no staff appointment would be possible but the ABC would be happy to use him as an artist; any fault or omission lay with the singer himself.

About a month later,⁴⁶ Peter Dawson sought to make an appointment through Bearup's secretary. On that day Bearup was genuinely ill, but after accepting the excuse in the morning - 'D seemed fairly reasonable, but stressed that he must see you' - by the afternoon Peter Dawson had become paranoiac:

At approx 3 o'clock rang - tone had changed considerably - in fact, manner most objectionable - told Bearup ill & no time for appointment ... Mr D then said that he "was not going to be put off by the Commission as he had been in the past and that if he didn't get satisfaction, he would go straight to the PM "

The meeting with Bearup took place on 5 March. Peter Dawson's complaint that he was being offered engagements at 6 guineas prompted the response:

When Mr D told you that he had only been offered a few engagements ... at 6, he I am afraid, spoke in somewhat characteristic irresponsible manner.

The clarification from the Controller of Programmes, was, that in order to make the ten engagements at fifteen guineas more acceptable, Peter Dawson had been offered a further 'regular engagement each week, by which he would be required to sing one song in *Searchlights*' from 16 October to 18 December at 8 guineas per.

A lengthier explanation of fees for other well-known male singers with international experience followed. The adviser concluded: 'I see no reason at all for offering Peter Dawson any larger fee than offered to Harold Williams or Heddle Nash, both of whom received 15 guineas for studio recitals.

It is significant that in the argument Peter Dawson was classified as 'a popular vocal artist probably considerably older in years than Harold Williams', who had 'never achieved Mr. William's eminence in the musical world.' It is indicative of an assessment which dogs Peter Dawson, the difference between eminence and fame. Harold Williams, a close friend of Peter Dawson, never achieved Peter Dawson's notoriety but was considered the better singer by musicians; his dominance was in the more strictly classical field, in particular he was generally regarded as the definitive *Elijah*.

⁴⁵ABC/AA, 1942, 02.06

⁴⁶ABC/AA, 1942, 03.02

Belittling Peter Dawson to justify expenditure was the logic of administrators. The administration was justifying its wartime budget by inferring that Peter Dawson could no longer command the fees of his prime. The argument could as well be reversed: if Peter Dawson was worth his previous studio recital fee, why not increase the fees of his colleagues? Peter Dawson's experience with royalties had taught him that broadcasters exploit artists. The fact that these other artists accepted their fees indicated their better-than-nothing philosophy rather than satisfaction; ABC was just for profile.

Having complained to Bearup, Peter Dawson suggested 'a series of dates either here in Sydney or throughout our Sister States' as if nothing had happened.⁴⁷ Bearup repeated the old offer.⁴⁸ A Mr. McCall left the information that 'Dawson's BBC fee was £50 per', but a contract was agreed⁴⁹ for '6 weekly recitals commencing Wednesday 20 May 8¹⁵-8³⁰pm in the series *Great Australian Baritones*' - at 15 guineas.

Once the contract was approved by Central, a contract for each studio performance was then the responsibility of the local station, in this case, 2FC/2BL Sydney, but when he was to contact the NSW Manager and Federal Publicity at the beginning of May 'This gentleman did not keep the appointment.'⁵⁰ It was no easier for Central: 'We have had the greatest trouble with PD again and after being unable to contact him or getting a reply from him for some days'. Peter Dawson finally rang the NSW Manager at home to say the series 'could be later - any time at all'. Peter Dawson had gone to New Zealand.

Peter Dawson's approaches to New Zealand in 1940 finally paid off with the 1942 invitation to sing in support of the £15 million New Zealand Liberty Loan. 'Such is fame!', he reported it to his brother-in-law,⁵¹ '[I received] £1000 + all expenses ... £15 million War Loan ... was filled in 3 weeks'.⁵² One collage photograph⁵³ shows Peter Dawson shaking hands with the Prime Minister above crowds in the city square and a newspaper cutting headed:

WELLINGTON RALLY
New £1 Bonds On Sale

The presence of the famous Australian baritone, Peter Dawson, at the lunchtime liberty rally in Wellington yesterday drew an unusually large crowd to the rally headquarters at the corner of Hunter St and Featherstone Street. There must have been fully 4000 people filling the pavement and roadways when he sang "The Changing of the Guard"

⁴⁷ABC/AA, 1942, 03.06

⁴⁸ABC/AA, 1942, 04.02

⁴⁹ABC/AA, 1942, 04.22

⁵⁰ABC/AA, 1942.05.06; 05.08

⁵¹Dawson, c.1946, hw. (MS5030/1/65-69) appears to be a draft. As 1947 tour to England organised about this time, suggests that he was asking Tom Noble, who had acted on his behalf many times, to see if he could organise a tour or performances.

⁵²newspaper, 1948, 10.22: '2 weeks'

⁵³1942, 05.18 NZ Bond tour, Wellington: signed Peter Dawson 18/5/42

The *New Zealand Listener* of 15 May advertised concerts which began that week:

1st Broadcast 2YA		this Sat	May 16
1st Liberty Concert			
Wellington	Town Hall	Tues	May 19
Auckland	Town Hall		May 23
Christchurch	Theatre Royal		May 28
Dunedin	Town Hall		June 01

According to other papers he was coming for the first time since 1933 'to star in a series of big patriotic "Liberty" concerts'.⁵⁴ After the 'broadcast for the NBS ' beginning Saturday, 16 May, the first Liberty concert was to be in Wellington Town Hall on 19 May, then in other cities until 1 June which agrees with the NZ Listener schedule. The New Zealand Broadcasting Services studio schedule was not available but NBS have dated recordings of War Loan Concerts with the Royal New Zealand Armed Forces Band⁵⁵ in Wellington on 1 June, in Auckland on 14 June and in Wellington again on 7 July.⁵⁶

As frustrated as the ABC might have been by his - from its point of view - unreliability, it was still interested in pinning him down to a series of broadcasts - at its price. It might appear that Peter Dawson had agreed to the fee, however, he was still smarting. Soon after his return from New Zealand he complained to the Government again:⁵⁷

I do not think, as an Australian, I have been offered a fair deal by the Australian Broadcasting Commission and especially in consideration of the services rendered by me in connection with the flotation of War Loans since their inception.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission has made me an offer of £15 each for a series of ten recitals. This is unreasonable considering their previous payment to me during 1940 was £40 for a similar engagement.

He justifies his 'unassailable' 'professional standing as a concert singer', and concludes:

I am sorry to worry you with all this apparent egotistical outburst, but at the same time I appeal to you to use your great influence over the ABC and with the view to their offering me a reasonable fee of at least £40 per recital.

While the Postmaster-General could not directly influence fees he did mention the subject to the Chairman of the ABC, which produced a very long, detailed self-righteous extension of the earlier explanation of the

⁵⁴Vose, 80-86 this paragraph incl. review 29 May of Wellington rally.

⁵⁵recollecting in 1961 the conductor calls it the New Zealand Air Force band

⁵⁶Burgis, 1981, 'information booklet' to *Ambassador of Song* & correspondence sighted at NFSa; therefore could have been in NZ from 15 May to at least 7 July = 8 weeks though the evidence appears to support Peter Dawson date.

⁵⁷ABC/AA, 1942, 07.11: PD to Senator Ashley, PM General

ABC's association with Peter Dawson since 1938.⁵⁸ There was 'little justification for these complaints' and moreover 'Mr Dawson might have been thought to have treated the Commission a little shabbily on one or two occasions.' A series, which had been offered, was still open. Six months later another letter to the Minister indicates that the deadlock had not been resolved.

The administrators saw Peter Dawson as intractable; they were offended by the behaviour of an artist driven to aggression and native cunning, because they could justify a significantly lower fee than he had enjoyed earlier. Artists like to work. Generally, the remuneration is not the driving force, but it is indicative of status. To cut everyone to a minimum diminishes them all. To reward them equally with a publicly exposed and agreed fee would be fairer, although it would not completely satisfy the status differentiation. Peter Dawson was very conscious of his popular status and expected the ABC, like the commercial houses, to recognise it.

But work must have flagged for at the beginning of April a ten-week contract at '23 guineas per week covering two performances per week' was agreed.⁵⁹ The ABC handled Peter Dawson very gingerly before it proceeded: 'It is understood that you are available for these engagements without interruption' and 'no other broadcasting organisations in this period', to which Peter Dawson cheerfully replied:

I am obliged by your letter to hand dated 6th April and I am agreeable to accept and abide by the terms contained therein, my engagement to commence Monday, 19th April.

The contract coincided with the end of Bearup's tenure in office and the return of Moses: 'in February 1943 Charles Moses made another unexpected return from the war, summoned by the Prime Minister'. The Prime Minister issued a statement explaining that the country needed Moses more at home than on the front. This led to conjecture which was never satisfied. Moses had wangled his way back against the wishes of the Board. He was recalled directly by John Curtin. The Chairman of the Board suspected some ulterior motive: that Kirke, the Manager for NSW, who 'was devoted to Moses ... and was close to Curtin' had initiated the move; that it implied a criticism of Bearup's management; that the Labour Government wanted to interfere with Board policy.⁶⁰

Peter Dawson's contract was explained to Moses as the old offer of fifteen guineas plus eight guineas for programmes like *Out of the Bag*.⁶¹ Mr McCall, on behalf of Peter Dawson had suggested twenty-five guineas, but had information the Mr. Dawson would probably agreed to twenty-three, which he did.

Moses was pleased to advise the Commissioners that:⁶²

⁵⁸ABC/AA, 1942, 08.03 - from the Acting General Manager

⁵⁹ABC/AA, 04.06, 04.07, 04.09

⁶⁰Inglis, 109-110

⁶¹x-ref to advertisement above.

⁶²ABC/AA, 1943, 04.21

These terms are very good from our point of view - the fee being lower than usually paid to artists of this standard such as Harold Williams

In June a recommendation was approved 'that Peter Dawson's contract be extended for a further ten weeks ... Dawson should appear in a special Military Band programme each week and continue his *Ballad Album* - this time on the alternative group of stations.' The series, *Comrades in Arms*, was dedicated to a different battalion each week.⁶³

Early in the new year a Peter Dawson proposal⁶⁴ suggesting a tour of Australia at a weekly salary of £25 plus travelling expenses, two or three appearances as desired, and 40% of the nett for public appearances, reached Head Office via the NSW Manager. Management was enthusiastic; with only a minor financial modification - 40% of the gross - and itinerary of twenty seven performances of various kinds was agreed, covering Brisbane/Sydney/ Newcastle/Adelaide/Hobart/ Perth/Melbourne.

Suddenly, on 9 May Peter Dawson pulled out of the tour: 'I am afraid this is just another illustration of the difficulty we have in the handling of this artist.' From an August 1944 press cutting: *Peter Dawson cancels NZ Loan Tour*,⁶⁵ it appears that Peter Dawson had accepted a better offer elsewhere.

Except for press cuttings indicating that Peter Dawson would sing *Song Hits of Two Wars* on the commercial *Big Parade* in April 1945, and in the ABC's *Music of the British Isles* in June,⁶⁶ there is silence in the files for nearly two years. The War was over. In March 1946 Peter Dawson proposed a country tour again, at the same fee as 1944. William James thought it a good idea, but the Controller of Programmes did not: 'I cannot say that my immediate reaction is favourable ... if he thought he could make money he would go off by himself and make more profit'. Moses, however, was enthusiastic, for he wanted to fulfil the ABC's obligation to regional Australia. But yet again the project died in the water; Peter Dawson did not reply to the ABC's offer.

Peter Dawson could not keep silent about ABC fees; at the end of November his criticism, published in several newspaper, stung even his friend William James to reply⁶⁷ 'that artists got very fair treatment and encouragement from National stations'. He countered Peter Dawson's assertion that the ABC level of fees was poor by comparison with commercial stations by pointing out that commercial stations actually only employed 'certain "names" for a few sessions', whereas the ABC employed hundreds of artists: 'Serious ones [in particular] would have little scope for their talents over advertising stations'.

⁶³ABC/AA, 1943, 09, 03: *Comrades in Arms* 7⁴⁵ dedicated to 19th Battalion; 1943, 11, 19, *Comrades in Arms* 16th battalion; Peter Dawson, who was sergeant in 42nd Battalion, will sing his new song *Men of Australia*.

⁶⁴ABC/AA, 1944, 02, 03, 03.06. 04.17

⁶⁵ABC/AA, *Daily Mirror*, 1944, 08, 07: 'following news that relatives of his wife had been killed by robot bombs in England'

⁶⁶ABC/AA, 1945, 04, 16, Radio Pictorial; publicity, 1945, 06.09: PD sings *Drakes Drum* Wed 6 June⁴¹⁵, Sat 3¹⁵ Nat

⁶⁷ABC/AA, 1946, 11.24; 11.25

To be fair, the ABC did employ large numbers of local artists on a casual basis. Many established Australian singers made their first broadcasts on *Young Australia*. The ABC sought to categorise artists equitably by auditioning, grading and paying according to the grade. Problems arose when artists felt they had out-grown a grade, or felt that their status had increased beyond the top grade. Artists returning with overseas experience or used to commercial rewards found the levels poor. Nevertheless, the ABC was a significant employer.

At the same time the feisty sixty-two year old complained publicly about the small audience at a concert in Grafton.⁶⁸ As he was still at logger-heads with the ABC it may be assumed that he had been invited or had initiated the concert himself. Did he notice the import of his observation that the 'majority were my contemporaries, no young people'? What did he expect? His repertoire had not changed - and never did.⁶⁹ Peter Dawson's abilities had not diminished, the programme was as substantial as ever but the audience was withering because tastes and values were changing.

The ebb and flow of the ABC/Peter Dawson relationship is difficult to comprehend: nine months after the files fell silent an agreement had been reached to offer Peter Dawson⁷⁰ a country tour of thirteen weeks, three concerts per week, one of which would be for 'Young People'. He would receive '£15 on account of 50% of gross for public concerts and ten guineas for Young People concerts, that is, a minimum of £40 per week.⁷¹ The Controller of Programmes foresaw the same difficulties as he had earlier, but Moses approved the venture.

The publicity machine had provided a two and a half page spread about *The Bradman of the Baritones*, when Peter Dawson informed the Commission that he was returning to England in July. The ABC shortened the tour to NSW, Queensland and South Australia. On 8 April Peter Dawson informed the Commission that he would 'fly in May', so the tour became studio performances only in NSW, on 15 April that he could not accept commitments outside of Sydney on account of Nan's poor health.

He had just returned from his successful 1947/48 tour of Great Britain, when it was announced that he had an exclusive ABC contract from February till July, 1949. 'He will give studio recitals in all States on the mainland, and in NSW, Victoria, West Australia and Queensland he will give public recitals; he will also appear with the Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland symphony Orchestras'.⁷²

⁶⁸ABC/AA, 1946, 11.29

⁶⁹accompanist Clarence Black: 1) *O ruddier, The Clock, Erl King*, encores: *I heard a forest praying, Who is Sylvia, Simon the Cellarer, Kangaroo & Dingo*; 2) *If music be the food of love, Kerry Dance, Song of the Flea, Glory of the Sea* (Sanderson), encores: *Waratah & Wattle; Lake Isle of Innesfree*; best item of night: *Largo*; 3) *Road beside the Sea* (Keats), *Money O!, Mandalay Scena*; closed with *Pride of Tipperary, Bonnie Earl of Moray, Waiata Poi, Changing of the Guard, Waltzing Matilda*.

⁷⁰ABC/AA, 1947, 01.30: 'Peter Dawson has requested Clarence Black as accompanist'

⁷¹he would earn more of the gross for public concerts was in excess of £30.

⁷²AMN, 1949, 02.00, 16

Behind the announcement lay the usual opening approaches and complex negotiations. Peter Dawson had written a personal letter to the Head of Variety in Melbourne,⁷³ describing the success of his tour, and in particular, his satisfaction with the twelve Doris Arnold Programmes for BBC, which he suggested the ABC broadcast too. Despite the enthusiasm of the ABC, copyright problems stopped that project.

In November Bearup, now, ABC representative in London, advised Sydney⁷⁴ that Peter Dawson was leaving on 14 December and expected to be in Australia from circa February to August. 'His agent says that Dawson "has not had a concert tour of Victoria and Queensland for ten years, of South Australia and Western Australia for fifteen years & Tasmania for seventeen."' As could be expected, the schedule of such a large entrepreneur was organised well in advance, but despite the difficulties it advised that it would organise engagements of some sort - at 15 guineas studio, £40 public recitals.⁷⁵ A paragraph in the final memorandum reads:

It is noted that he has already left London and is due to arrive in Sydney late Jan. Previous experience with this artist prompts the suggestion that the completion of the contract with him should be treated as a matter of urgency as soon as he arrives.

But Moses was not prepared to wait. On 22 December Peter Dawson was cabled on *Orontes*:

OFFER TOUR STUDIO RECITALS AND VARIETY PROGRAMME
APPEARANCES TEN WEEKS COMMENCING BEGINNING
FEBRUARY MAINLAND CAPITAL CITIES MINIMUM 25
ENGAGEMENTS 15 G EACH STOP BROADCASTS THIS PERIOD TO
BE EXCLUSIVE ABC STOP ALSO 11 PUBLIC RECITALS 8
ORCHESTRALS VICTORIA, NSW QUEENSLAND 11 WEEKS
COMMENCING APRIL 22ND FEE 40 G EXCLUSIVE COMMISSION

Contacting Peter Dawson proved illusive. The Manager for West Australia was asked to 'ASCERTAIN DECISION REQUIRED URGENTLY MOSES', when the ship arrived in Fremantle. On 6 January, 1949 Charles Moses and Peter Dawson again locked horns. The exchange began with a teleprinter report from the Manager:⁷⁶

Moses: Dawson not happy fees offered. Suggests 50 studios 80 public concerts plus travelling wife & self would like to discuss proposition on arrival in Sydney 14th Jan

which prompted the reply from Moses:

⁷³ABC/AA, 1949, 09.02: "Our Pleasure to Present" series in conjunction Rawicz and Landauer and Berty Dawson at the organ. The fanmail is colossal - estimate at least 20 million listening ⁹³⁰-10 every Sunday night. Would it be poss for ABC to put the records over?

⁷⁴ABC/AA, 1948, 11.01

⁷⁵ABC/AA, several memoranda 1948, 11.01 -12.20

⁷⁶ABC/AA, 1949, 01.06 - 01.11

prepared to go to 30 g studios, 25 g variety, 50 g on account of 50% gross public recitals, 40 g orchestrals. agree pay fare Australia self et wife. This our maximum offer essential immediate reply order arrange bookings

then Peter Dawson to Moses:

my terms reasonable no alteration and considering ABCOM bearing no travel fares England agree dates your 22nd Dec regards Peter Dawson

which prompted the compromise:

Commission prepared agree terms your cable except studio appearances for which propose 35 g. couldst cable acceptance these terms and dates our cable 22 December. Looking forward to meeting you both Charles Moses

but in a telegram Peter Dawson had agreed to:

40 g studios, 35g variety, 60 g or 50% gross public recitals, 50 g orchs

This exchange of offers and counter-offers, a return to pre-war fees, does not seem rancorous; rather that Charles Moses respected Peter Dawson. A new era of friendly co-operation had begun.

The explanation for Peter Dawson's renewed confidence in his negotiating position appears in the follow-up report by the West Australian manager to Moses.⁷⁷ Peter Dawson had simply ignored the cable to the ship 'as he considered the fees were far too low to consider. He had just completed '89 concerts at more than double the concert fee we were offering in Sterling'; had given 29 broadcasts 'at a higher fee than we were offering' and HMV had made another 25 records of his work.⁷⁸

When the Manager pointed out that the ABC's funding could not be compared with the BBC, Peter Dawson said 'he realized that, and it was for this reason that he and Harold Williams had accepted 15 guineas for studio engagements during the war just to keep their names before the public.'

As to a travel allowance to include Nan: 'his wife is not in the best of health and he feels it would be necessary for her to travel with him when he is out of Sydney.'⁷⁹

One snapshot⁸⁰ shows Peter Dawson, Geoffrey Parsons and Nan arriving in Melbourne by air. Highlighting the dramatic change in transport since the horse and buggy days of the 1909 tour forty years earlier, Peter Dawson's could boast that at the end of this tour he had travelled 'over 12000 miles by

⁷⁷ABC/AA, 1949, 01.07

⁷⁸at those fees Peter Dawson earned a minimum of [89 x 80g] £7500 for concerts and [29 x 50g] £1500 for broadcasts. EMI contract was only for 2 new titles, so 23 could only be remakes of old ones.

⁷⁹ABC/AA, 01.11, signed PD 01.17. The final contract was for: 22 weeks from 1st week in February to 1st week July 1949; minimum 25 appearances in studio recitals and variety programmes, at fee 40 g studio, 35 variety; 11 public recitals at 60 on a/c 50% gross; 8 orchestral at 50 g; + fares Peter Dawson and his wife when travelling out of Sydney; exclusive - no pay if ill - make up missed performances.

⁸⁰1949, 03.23 in *Trans-Air* Vol 2, No 9 May 1949

air'.⁸¹ The tour began on Sydney on 7 February.⁸² On Tuesday, 22 March he gave his first public recital in Adelaide⁸³, with the young winner of the ABC Instrumental & Vocal competition, Geoffrey Parsons, as associate artist⁸⁴ and 'self-effacing accompanist'.⁸⁵ When Dr Enid Robertson⁸⁶ reviewed the second concert⁸⁷ she acknowledged both his popularity and the audience satisfaction as 'he lavishly added extra songs at every opportunity to an already extensive programme'. She did, however, form the personal opinion that his technical abilities - 'so easy and unobtrusive that one tends to take the artistry directing it for granted' - outweighed the quality of the programme. As this view had dogged him all his life, it must grudgingly be acknowledged that this was a general critical impression, not an isolated aberration.

'Quietly sung'⁸⁸ is noted more often in concerts from now on, which suggests that critics felt he had lost the virility needed for the concert hall. The malaise is explained in another Adelaide newspaper.⁸⁹ Preceded by the conventional view of deterioration: 'Who has heard of any first-rate artist singing at such an age?', the discerning critic observed that 'he [is] obviously saving his voice, and employ[s] what might be described as a "microphone" technique, whether singing over the air or in the hall'.

When he appeared with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra on 22 April⁹⁰ no amount of bluster could save him or the orchestra. The critic could not be bothered staying after the 'indifferent performances' of the first half:

the orchestra played in a fashion which indicated that they looked upon these extra concerts as an opportunity to take a holiday from responsibilities and an advantage of an audience which could not demand to be taught the difference between good and bad orchestral playing.

Peter Dawson fared little better:

arias from Battishill's "Almina" and "Acis and Galatea" (Handel), numbers which I felt were, quite apart from their unpopular appeal for such an audience, not best suited to the style of singing which is characteristic of this famous baritone.

⁸¹AMN, 1950, 01.00, 7

⁸²newspaper (*The ABC Weekly*), 1949, 02.05

⁸³AMN, 1949, 04.00, 8

⁸⁴ABC/AA, 1949, 02.08: Geoffrey Parsons assisting artist and accompanist received: fees £15 per week plus travelling allow 25/- per diem when absent from Sydney; fees and travel paid by individual states

⁸⁵Adelaide newspaper, 1949, 03.30: 'Geoffrey Parson, a self-effacing accompanist, played arrangements of Bach, and a group of side-slipping moderns, the flippant dryness of which suited him better.'

⁸⁶*East Adelaide School 1886-1986* [Peter Dawson's primary school]: 'violinist Dr Enid Robertson, the first woman in Australia to make a career as a music critic'.

⁸⁷Adelaide newspaper, 1949, 03.30: *Peter Dawson's second recital*

⁸⁸'Leowe's [sic] version of *Edward*, though quietly sung, was by contrast given an effect of mounting suspense.'

⁸⁹Adelaide newspaper, 1949, 03.23: *Singer, 67, is still a fine artist*

⁹⁰AMN, 1949: 05.00, 20

Largo al factotum was acceptable though 'the baritone's voice is now dry and colourless'.

This critic was one of the rarer breed who was not mesmerised by what was expected, but courageously passed an opinion on what was heard. A good recording voice is not necessarily a good voice in the concert hall; deterioration had set in, which could be compensated by choice of repertoire, transpositions and the technical skills of sound engineers. The constant choice of *O ruddier than the cherry* must also say something about Peter Dawson's musical appreciation. Ossified, springs to mind.

When Peter Dawson sang the same programme for an overfilled Youth Concert in the City Hall in Brisbane the Queensland critic wrote more circumspectly:⁹¹ 'Peter Dawson is in danger of becoming a legend during his own lifetime' and 'though there is not perhaps the old volume' he was enthusiastically received. The second concert choices, again familiar repertoire but more in touch with his audience, were *The Flea*, *Non piu andrai* and *The Fret Foot*'.

Roger Covell, the young music reporter for the Courier Mail⁹² has a field day with a long, garish article set around a recent caricature of Peter Dawson, headed *Peter Dawson First Lord of the Gramophone* and sub-headed *Croon-happy teenagers, fed on milk-and-water songs flock to his concerts to hear that robust hearty voice*. Included in the familiar biography was the news that Peter Dawson planned to sing twenty-six concerts in New Zealand from 1 September.

A typical programme for the 'International Celebrity Concert Series' used at Horsham, a country town in Victoria,⁹³ contains the old familiar numbers:

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------|
| 1 | Recit: <i>I rage, I melt, I burn</i> | |
| | Air: <i>O ruddier than the cherry</i> from "Acis and Galatea" | Handel |
| | <i>Little prayer I love</i> | Alba Rizzi |
| | <i>Fret-foot</i> | J. P. McCall |
| 3. | <i>The spice of life</i> | Michael North |
| | <i>Sherwood</i> | J. R. Dear |
| | <i>Money O!</i> | Michael Head |
| | <i>Heh, for the factotum</i> from "The Barber of Seville" | Rossini |
| 5. | <i>Speak Music</i> (from "The Professor" by A. C. Benson) | Elgar |
| | <i>The Laird o' Cockpen</i> | Lady Nairne |
| | <i>The Clock</i> | Loewe |
| | <i>Waiata Poi</i> | Alfred Hill |
| | <i>Waltzing Matilda</i> | Marie Cowan |

The extensive biography of 'the world's most popular baritone' now included the new appellation: "The Bradman of Baritones" because 'his sales have reached 13 million in 44 years'. 'Nor is his popularity decreasing'; 'His Masters Voice contracted Mr. Dawson, while in England, to re-make some of his former records, and also to make a number of new ones'. The programme advertises nine double-sided HMV recordings:

⁹¹AMN, 1949, 08.00, 24: 1949, 06.11, 18: Peter Dawson with Q.S.O.

⁹²ABC/AA, 1949, 06.16. later Professor of Music, University of NSW, and Sydney music critic

⁹³programme, 1949, 05.07: ABC Horsham

*The Erl King and Don Juan's Serenade
 Room for the Factotum and Sirs, Your Toast
 Now Your Days of Philandering are Over and Credo
 On the Road to Mandalay and The Trumpeter
 Sanctuary of the Heart and In a Persian Market
 The Sacred Hour and In a Monastery Garden
 Why Do the Nations? and Farewell (Songs of the Fleet)
 The Floral Dance and The Lute Player
 The Lost Chord and The Holy City*

'I was expected to sing in all sort of out-of-the-way-places, such as Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill. Naturally I objected!' ⁹⁴ was the substance of the caustic statements about the ABC in 1939. Did Peter Dawson reflect on it when he sang in Broken Hill on 11 May, 1949, where he was photographed at the Flying Doctor Service Base? City critics might have been saying something negative about the sixty-seven year old, but his pedal-wireless audience knew an old cobbler when they heard one: ⁹⁵

After completing his scheduled radio programme he was linked to 138 two-way wireless sets within a radius of 500 miles of Broken Hill. The outback audience had been expecting him and after listening to his opening sallies they switched their two-way sets to "send" and replied ... "the air was soon filled with gales of laughter as impromptu funny stories were exchanged"

And that was not the last Broken Hill saw of him, for he returned under the aegis of the ABC again on 29 September, 1951.

From contract approvals, itineraries and enquiries it is clear that Peter Dawson was a particular favourite of Variety in Victoria. In fact, he was there so often that at one time the rumour was published that he intended to move to Melbourne. ⁹⁶ His programme presentation method was explained by Norman Shepherd, one of his staunch advocates: ⁹⁷

After a medley of his most popular songs, introduction, then into the first song he sang in public, he then could tell a very short story about it followed by his favourite number written and composed by him into his favourites of today arranged for choir, as a good finale.

When the tour had finished Peter Dawson had grossed £2720.11.0 for 16 Public recitals, 7 orchestral concerts, 16 studio recital and 6 Variety studio recitals. ⁹⁸ Some 9000 customers paid to hear him; for the public recitals he had averaged £91 - as 50% of the gross - instead of the minimum £63, so average attendances were higher than anticipated. Nevertheless, the ABC had to carry a small loss (£416), because Concert and Broadcasting Expenses for such a wide-ranging tour (£3569), were greater than the Income

⁹⁴ Adelaide newspaper, 1939, 06.04

⁹⁵ newspaper, 1949, 05.11: *A radio audience that answered back*

⁹⁶ ABC/AA, 1953, 05. 25: press cutting, *PD to Live In Melbourne* Coronation Concert Melbourne Town Hall

⁹⁷ ABC/AA, 1949, 02.11; 04.05

⁹⁸ ABC/AA, financial reports as at end 1949, 06.18

generated (£3153).⁹⁹

The ABC tour finished in June; in July he was photographed with the Captain of the *Charles Livingstone*, en route to New Zealand, where he and Geoffrey Parsons must have concertised from c. August to the beginning of November.¹⁰⁰ AMN¹⁰¹ credited him with '26 concerts in 19 centres' and Radio New Zealand has a recording of *Wanderthirst* in concert at Rotorua and an interview in the first week of November¹⁰², which must have been at the conclusion of the tour as Peter Dawson wanted to be back in London by the end of the year.

To ensure that the ten programmes he had recorded at the end of the 1950 tour would not be jeopardised by the Musicians Union, Peter Dawson had to be out of England for the *Festival of Britain* in 1951. From 'Peter Dawson documents' it appears that this suited the ABC, which wanted him for another tour, to begin officially in Melbourne on 9 December, 1950.¹⁰³ From ABC records it is clear that Peter Dawson again took the initiative.

About a year after the 1949 tour had finished Peter Dawson wrote a gossip letter to Charles Moses,¹⁰⁴ in which he mentioned that he was leaving England in November. He reported that the Festival Hall was 'quickly taking shape on the south side of the Thames facing the Savoy', expounded with detail on the 'unbounded enjoyment' of BBC Television, in particular on 'so many "close ups" of their Majesties the King and Queen that we feel they belong to us and not we to them.'

Moses took his cue: 'we shall certainly be glad to get into touch with you again shortly to make a specific offer of engagements', which crossed Peter Dawson's to William James - direct and succinct - 'Will you please arrange another Australian tour for me on the lines of the last one'

William James had some vague suggestions for Moses to which he added a pencil note: 'I think Dawson would be well worth using at Jubilee functions. [1951] He is an Australian figure and we must NOT overlook him.' By the time Moses had signed the letter¹⁰⁵ it was worded: 'we are investigating the possibility of tour of certain states early in 1951 - discuss on arrival. We also have in mind associating you with some of the important Jubilee musical projects which are now only in the embryonic stage', but in the meantime there was an offer of:

- (a) one weekly studio engagement (from Sydney) as from the week commencing November 12 1950 until end of the year at £40 (7 appearances)

⁹⁹loss 1996 c.\$A5000.

¹⁰⁰photograph, 1949, 07.00: two one dated, on the other Peter Dawson and six others named. dates of tour estimated from NZ radio recordings and fact that was back in London by December. No evidence of entrepreneur. Could have been ABC/NZ radio agreement or independent.

¹⁰¹AMN, 1950, 01.00, 7

¹⁰²Burgis, 1981, 'information booklet' to *Ambassador of Song*; also in NFSA: NZ, 1949, 11.03 *Wanderthirst* in concert at Rotorua, 1949, 11.07 interview

¹⁰³Adelaide newspaper, 1950, 12.05

¹⁰⁴ABC/AA, 1950, 05.22 - actually arrived in Australia in November.

¹⁰⁵ABC/AA, 1950, 09.25

- (b) two appearances in each of two of our Variety productions *Strike Up the Band* from Melbourne and *Jim Gussey Presents* from Sydney, ie four appearances at a total of #140 (£35 per)
- (c) three appearances with our orchestras publicly at £50: 19 November Sydney open air matinee, 28 November Melbourne, 10 December Melbourne matinee

Cable to accept

The cables flew back and forth again. Peter Dawson agreed 'one weekly studio from Sydney as from week commencing 12 November until end of year and at £50 per appearance.' The ABC had offered £40. Moses agreed to £50 if Peter Dawson would throw in the three orchestral appearances at the same price. Peter Dawson wanted £100 for each orchestral. The parties finally agreed on £60 plus £2 daily travelling allowance and transportation.

When Peter Dawson recalled an 'ovation that made headlines' after singing *Largo al factotum* then *Now your days of philandering are over*,¹⁰⁶ he was not exaggerating. The scheduled outdoor orchestral in Cooper Park on 11 November, under the baton of the great English musician, Eugene Goossens, drew huge crowds, and Peter Dawson was mobbed for autographs.¹⁰⁷ About a year later, in Mildura, he again opened with *Largo al factotum*:¹⁰⁸ 'in three brief minutes 68-year-old baritone Peter Dawson last night stole the show', but 'he was not allowed to sing anything except the two items programmed'!

The planned itinerary for November/December concerts grew to:

24 Nov Syd to Melb	
28 Nov 28	Orch Town Hall Harry Hutchins
29 Nov Melb to Syd	
1 Dec Syd to Melb	private business
4 Dec to Adel	
7 Dec	Messiah
8 Dec to Melb	
10 Dec	Free Town Hall Sir Bernard Heinze

These were skirmishes before the major tours for the Jubilee Year. One must have given Peter Dawson a great deal of satisfaction: a 'Special EXTRA Performance'¹⁰⁹ of *Messiah* in the Adelaide Town Hall to honour the golden jubilee of his first performance there under C. J. Stevens. His fellow soloists included his old friend, tenor Fred Williamson.¹¹⁰ When Peter Dawson sang *Messiah* with the Adelaide Choral Society on 7 December 1950, he could reflect on an eventful life, in which he had fulfilled the destiny his mentor had predicted. Dr. Enid Robertson, who had reviewed the recital in

¹⁰⁶programme, 1950, 11,19 & newspaper, 1951, 04.25

¹⁰⁷ABC/AA, 1950, 11, 20: *Sydney Morning Herald*: photo Peter Dawson besieged by autograph hunters at Cooper Park. 20000 listened to two arias. ditto *Daily Telegraph*

¹⁰⁸newspaper, 1951, 10.26: review of ABC concert, *Mildura Daily*

¹⁰⁹programme, 1950, 12.07

¹¹⁰x.ref *Good Companions* Dinner, 1931

1949, also reviewed this 'popular annual event'.¹¹¹ The conductor was praised, the choir was praised, Fred Williamson was praised, Peter Dawson was praised:

The rich, sweet timbre of Mr Dawson's voice, and the artistry with which he made his climaxes, in the recitative *For Behold Darkness* and the following air *The People Who Walked in Darkness* make his singing here memorable

but not the orchestra:

later accompaniments also suffered some loss of subtlety, especially those to Peter Dawson's first recitatives and airs, where the orchestral background was hardly sympathetic enough for the finer nuances of the singer's quiet, but eloquent, interpretation.

Critics had now been commenting on his 'quiet' technique for some time. Was this quiet technique deliberate or the limit of his capabilities? It would have been employed in the upper reaches of the voice. By falsely darkening a vowel and singing lightly it would be possible to sing the passage notes with relatively little physical effort. The sound would be quiet and secure. It could be used to produce a gentle effect for the conclusion of a lyrical song; it could register cleanly and satisfactorily for the microphone; but if used too much in concerts, it would leave the listener dissatisfied, for the appeal of any voice is a type of tautness;¹¹² the voice must have a certain 'zing' to create a sympathetic response from the listener. This 'zing' applies equally to any voice, whether natural or trained: if the listener does not empathise with the sound, if the listener does not sub-consciously identify with the sound, the response will be negative.

Peter Dawson had invested a lifetime in his voice and his popularity; it could be said that by now the capital had been used up and he was living off the accumulated interest: that even without the fundamental physical capability of his prime, he had so much concert and broadcast audience charisma, that he could hold the attention of the less discerning public indefinitely.

William James' advice that Peter Dawson could be a singularly effective weapon in the Jubilee armoury of the ABC was respected. It fell to him to organise a tour for Peter Dawson - never a simple matter. To begin with Peter Dawson was not prepared to go out interstate in summer; would not accept any engagements during first two or three months of the new year but would from April onwards.¹¹³ In March he was expounding the old propaganda:¹¹⁴ he had recorded *March of Liberty*, a recruiting song, which began 'Youth is on the march to liberty' 'to stimulate interest in the nation-

¹¹¹Adelaide newspaper, 1950, 12.08

¹¹²"tautness" in the sense that, for example, a violin string will not produce a sound at all until it is taut, until it is tightened to point where it can vibrate over a sound-box. 'zing' is the author's onomatopoeic descriptor.

¹¹³ABC/AA, 1950, 11.30

¹¹⁴ABC/AA, ABC Weekly, 1951, 03.04

wide recruiting campaign' for the Korean War. His old RSL habit never flagged: "I'm too old to join up myself but if I can do anything to help build up our defences - then I'm in it, boots and all" - which did not endear him to the younger generation.¹¹⁵

Indicative of Peter Dawson's prevailing mood was his enthusiastic endorsement of radio in the long biography, which publicised his ABC commitments:¹¹⁶

He thinks that the phonograph has been the greatest means in the world of musical education, bringing the best into homes ... radio he rates as the phonograph's worthy successor

As part of its obligation to the 'Commonwealth Jubilee Celebrations', the ABC used him to cover various parts of the country. The exact details of each tour are not spelled out, but from April onward he appears in various parts of the country, singing the old reliable repertoire. One set programme, sung in Gosford on 3 April, with Clarence Black as accompanist, was also scheduled for Perth on 5 June.¹¹⁷ The reception for this concert was typical,¹¹⁸ 'warm reception', 'some evergreen favourites':

each of his songs was sung with full round notes, perfect control and clarity of diction, while stirring finishes exemplified the warmth of feeling and understanding he had for the whole of his choice contribution.

When ABC Adelaide could not contact him to sing *Boots in Moods & Melodies* on 25 May, it was discovered that he was doing the Red Cross tour through Tasmania. Though much to the ABC's surprise, it was outside its control, for it had only contracted his services from 'May 12 - June 9 exclusive', which included a Jubilee concert in the Melbourne Town Hall with Marjorie Lawrence, and two other artists who would make a name in Australia: violinist Beryl Kimber and aboriginal tenor Harold Blair.¹¹⁹ Another contract, from '13 September ex Sydney return Sydney 26 October'¹²⁰ included a country tour of South Australia, which began with a concert in Adelaide:¹²¹

¹¹⁵newspaper, 1951,04.25: *Peter Dawson*: 'He is now singing for a new recruiting drive, and among other activities has recorded with the Eastern Command Brass Band, *Song of Liberty* by Oscar Walters.' 'Among the rousing songs he sang to help young men make up their minds was one called *Now or Never*, in which the patriotic sentiment was so vigorous that it aroused the anger of pacifists and others.'

¹¹⁶newspaper, (*People*) 1951, 04.25. The opposite to 1939!

¹¹⁷ABC/AA, 1951, 04. 03:1) *Wachet Betet*, *Where'er you walk*, *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, *Erl King*; 3) *Snowbird* (Thayer), *Wanderthirst*, *Coronach* (for the death of a Scottish Chieftain); 5) *Fret-foot*, *Mandalay* (a scena portraying four distinct musical settings, and as arranged by J. P. McCall). The whole programme was timed at 80 minutes plus a fifteen minute interval. [*Snowbird* was a new song, by the composer of *I travel the Road*, which he had used in England and now used constantly.]

¹¹⁸ABC/AA, 1951, 04.12

¹¹⁹ABC/AA, 1951, 04.30, 05.01, 05.12

¹²⁰ABC/AA, 1950, 09.13

¹²¹Adelaide newspaper 1951, 09.13: ... In Sydney on Tuesday and Wednesday Mr Dawson

"Land of Mine" the prize-winning Jubilee song composed by the conductor of the SA Symphony Orchestra (Mr Henry Krips), will probably be first sung in South Australia by Adelaide-born bass-baritone Peter Dawson. "It would be very appropriate for it to be heard here for the first time on a Jubilee tour such as this. ... when Mr Krips will be conducting [my Adelaiderecital].

For the tour of Renmark, Pinnaroo, Broken Hill, Whyalla, the 'accompanist will be 24 year old James Renfrey of Penola'.

A Fremantle programme¹²² is almost identical with the programme reviewed by Enid Robertson in 1949:

- | | | | |
|----|-----|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) | Recit. and Air: | |
| | | "I Rage, I Melt, I Burn" | Handel |
| | | "O Ruddier than the Cherry" | |
| | | from the Cantata "Acis and Galatea" | Handel |
| | (b) | "The Clock" | Loewe |
| | (c) | "The Traveller" | Godard |
| 3. | (a) | "If Music be the Food of Love" | |
| | | from "Twelfth Night" | Alison Travers |
| | (b) | "Sea Winds" | Julius Harrison |
| | (c) | "Edward" | Loewe |
| 5. | (a) | "A Sailor's Song" | Besley |
| | (b) | "Sherwood" (At Daybreak) | J. R. Dear |
| | (c) | "Lassiter's Last Ride" | J. P. McCall |

The 'new recordings by Peter Dawson', to which he referred in 1949,¹²³ were now being advertised:

<i>Whalin' up the Lachlan</i> and <i>Gentleman Jim</i>	B9618
<i>By the Side of the Road</i> and <i>Snowbird</i> ¹²⁴	B9634
<i>Drake</i> and <i>The Smuggler's Song</i>	B9657
<i>Wandering the King's Highway</i> and <i>The Dreamer</i>	B9739
<i>The Cry of the Wild Goose</i> and <i>That Lucky Old Sun</i>	B9913
<i>Walk Down the Road</i> and <i>Fret-foot</i>	JO166
<i>Mandalay Potpourri</i>	EA3295
<i>Keep Thou My Heart</i> and <i>Blessed Are They</i>	EA3303
<i>There'll Come a Day</i> and <i>This is My Land</i>	EA3317
<i>Calling Me Home</i> and <i>God's With You Every Day</i>	EA3461
<i>The Bushrangers</i> and <i>A Rolling Stone</i>	EA3462
<i>The Lord Is My Shepherd</i> and <i>Thou, O Lord, Art My Shepherd</i>	EA3769
B and JO series, 7/- each; EA series, 5/6 each	

The pattern of sorties could have repeated themselves, but a proposed trip to Perth and Kalgoorlie, aborted because of bronchitis,¹²⁵ suggests that he

recorded the song and the second and third prize-winners in the contest. ... with Sydney Symphony Orchestra cond: Krips. Note: MS5030, G(i) *Land o' Mine*, Peter Dawson, A.E. Farrell, Allan, Melb, 1941

¹²²programme, 1951, 05.29

¹²³ABC/AA, 1949, 09.02, op.cit.

¹²⁴ABC Weekly 1949, 02.05: 'big demand for *Snow-Bird* North American Indian ballad with Kentucky Minstrels & BBC Symphony' - favoured by PD in many subsequent programmes

¹²⁵ABC/AA, 1952.03.11. Robert Simmons was substituted.

may have been having continual health problems. By the end of 1952 Melbourne was asking, 'what about using Peter Dawson, he has been heard little lately'.¹²⁶ for Nan's failing health dominated his life. If he performed, then only in Sydney. Nan died on 31 January, 1953. The question was, how would it affect the seventy-one year old after such a long, devoted marriage?

Without the ABC files he would appear to have been inactive until the 1955 tour, but even in March 1953 Melbourne Variety was asking Sydney again:¹²⁷ 'I hope you have not forgotten Peter Dawson and Harold Williams. We can afford them before the end of the financial year.' If nothing else, Peter Dawson was still in demand for *The Village Glee Club*, the next on May 12 and 13. An advertisement for these programmes incited the old warrior to demand 'who was responsible for publishing dreadful photo of him on page 24 of the Weekly'.¹²⁸ But this spark of life only endeared him to Melbourne management, which thought it well worthwhile paying a flight and first-class accommodation for Peter Dawson and his sister-in-law, Constance - who had now become his travelling companion - to have him on their programmes.

Among others, he appeared on an ABC self-promotional *Happy Birthday*,¹²⁹ a St. Andrew's Day broadcast for which he was photographed in his beret,¹³⁰ and in January 1954 appeared at the Sydney Town Hall at 7¹⁵ on *Starlight Variety* and at 7⁴⁵ in *Sportsman of the Year*. A publicity biography¹³¹ concludes with the paean from William James:

"Peter Dawson & Melba were Australia's two ambassadors of song. They put this country on the musical map."

so who more appropriate than the old maestro to sing at the *Royal Tour Concert* in Canberra¹³² and for the *Queens' Departure*.¹³³

The most extensive undertaking in 1954 was the studio series, *Fifty Years of Song*. From the title it could appear to be a broadcast of the BBC series of 1950, but it was, in fact, a direct broadcast Australian retrospective. The series was scheduled for ten weeks beginning 8 March.¹³⁴ The BBC format

¹²⁶ABC/AA, 1952, 09.30

¹²⁷ABC/AA, 1953, 03.13

¹²⁸ABC/AA, 1953, 05.07: Melbourne advises Sydney. From a publicity point of view it is not a bad photo. It is a close-up of Peter Dawson looking happy taken at the time. Did he feel it made him look his age?

¹²⁹ABC/AA, 1953, 07.02, 21st Birthday

¹³⁰ABC/AA, 1953, 11.30, *ABC Weekly*. Programme, 1953, 11.28: It was not mere coincidence because Peter Dawson was in Melbourne to sing at the St. Andrew's Day Dinner given by The Melbourne Scots on 28 November.

¹³¹ABC/AA, 1953, 09.04, *Herald*, Melbourne

¹³²ABC/AA, 1954, 02.16 and Dawson, 1954, 02.16, Menzies speech to Queen Elizabeth II: so he was present at Parliament House on 16 February when Menzies gave his speech to the Queen.

¹³³pay-in slip

¹³⁴ABC/AA, 1954, 03.08 and others: Peter Dawson, Jim Gussey and orchestra, script John McLeod, Producer John Wiltshire. Scheduled 10 week series: 1) Mar 8, 1900-1905; 2) Mar 15, 5-10; 3) Mar 22, 10-15; 4) Mar 29, 15-20; 5) April 5, 20-25; 6) April 12, 25-30; 7) April 19, 30-35; 8) April 26, 35-40; 9) May 3, 40-45; 10) May 10, 45-50

was repeated - five years in each segment starting with 1900 - so the repertoire was the same too. All did not run exactly according to schedule: 5 April was postponed because Peter Dawson was indisposed, and, as the concluding programme was on 31 May, another hiccup must have occurred. Could it have been his wedding to Constance Bedford Noble on 30 April?¹³⁵

The final programme, advertised as 'highlights from 1945-50', was to include *The Vagabond*,¹³⁶ one verse of *Its a long way to Akarana* (ie Auckland), a version of *Its a long way to Tipperary* followed by *Waiata Poi*, and Malotte's *The Lord's Prayer*. It was indicative of the audience's reception that the programme was repeated each week from 4 January, 1955; when Peter and Constance Dawson were on tour in England.

Peter Dawson and Con arrived back in Australia after that last trip to England about June 1955. In 28 November¹³⁷ he received a payment for a programme titled: *Peter Dawson Sings Again*. The December edition of *AMN*¹³⁸ indicated that the series would be broadcast each Saturday at 7⁴⁵pm, beginning 10 December, 1955. In July 1956 an article, *Last Song of Peter Dawson*, appeared¹³⁹ announcing the '10th in a series of 12 broadcasts with Tommy Tycho', which could be Peter Dawson's 'last recital', because the seventy-four year-old was under doctor's order to give up singing. Buttrose, who merely copied the substance of the current ABC recital programmes, noted that, though the voice was still good, the seventy-four year-old singer of '13,000,000 discs' had declared that there would be 'none of the Melba business'; his memory was getting slower, he had an aversion to holding the words and could not be bothered learning new songs. Peter Dawson's personal documents reveal that he used words for the series.¹⁴⁰ He would introduce the songs before he sang them and at the end of the programme sign off with the phrase: 'on behalf of Tommy Tycho & his players I bid you goodnight'.¹⁴¹

The idea of *Peter Dawson Sings Again* was mentioned in June,¹⁴² but whether initially by Peter Dawson or the ABC cannot be determined. The official announcement appeared 3 December¹⁴³ accompanied by a smiling Peter Dawson listening to 'one of his early recordings on an old phonograph' - the 1898 model presented to him at the EMI reception in

¹³⁵ABC/AA, 1954, 05.12, *Radio Call*: Singer 73 weds again. Married Sydney April 30 [op.cit.]

¹³⁶sang at Newcastle-on-Tyne 1947 with Gerald Moore

¹³⁷Pay-in slip, 1955, 11.28

¹³⁸AMN, 1955, 12.00, 37

¹³⁹Sydney newspaper, 1956, 07.07. Lengthy biography by Charles Buttrose.

¹⁴⁰for example Dawson, 1955, 12.24: Words Programme No.4.

¹⁴¹on earlier sheets Peter Dawson has written 'on behalf of Tommy Tycho & his players I bid you goodnight' on sheet, programme 4 31 December, 1955 he has crossed out Tommy and inserted 'on behalf of Thomas Tycho and his players I bid you goodnight'. Tycho the band was not one of the ABC classical orchestras but small studio variety band as existed also in commercial radio, or as noted in discussion of 1939 cinema tour.

¹⁴²ABC/AA, 1955, 06.16

¹⁴³ABC/AA, 1955, 12.03, *ABC Weekly*: as AMN op.cit.

London on the last tour:

"Today people like me to sing songs of the open air, of the country, sea and travel like *The Road to Mandalay* and *Boots*. But the song that has remained the favourite of most people is *The Floral Dance*."

The titles which can be identified are all old repertoire; no arias, no Old Masters, no oratorio; just another repetition of many of the favourites ballads in the *Fifty Years of Song* series, now chosen randomly. The 'opening programme [was] *Arrow & the Song, Snowbird, Floral Dance, Clancy of the Overflow*'; the rest were a mixture of songs from his early days (*The Lute Player, The Holy City*), others relatively new (*Waltzing Matilda, Mandalay Scena, Marri'd*¹⁴⁴), and a good sprinkling of solid McCall numbers (*Fret Foot, Westward Ho!, and Boots*).

From the response of correspondents,¹⁴⁵ the projected series of six programmes began in December as scheduled. Whether it became a regular series which ended in July, whether new programmes were made, or whether the first six were repeated later in the year is not clear. As each programme available is different¹⁴⁶ it appears to have been on-going. The first six programmes were sold on to the New Zealand Broadcasting Service. As was customary in broadcast agreements, residuals were sold on for half the initial fee. Peter Dawson signed for £20 per, Thomas Tycho signed for £20 per - for himself and the whole band.¹⁴⁷

Over the years Peter Dawson had become good friends with the Adelaide Concert Manager, Athol Lykke,¹⁴⁸ so when he died the ABC organised a Memorial Concert in the Adelaide Town Hall in April 1956, for which Peter Dawson gave his services free.¹⁴⁹ Among fellow artists were the coloratura soprano, Glenda Raymond and Adelaide tenor, Max Worthley, popular young artists who were to make a name for themselves.

Peter Dawson chose those serious ballads, which should have put the lie to any lack of recognition as a serious singer:

If music be the food of love play on

Crabbed age and youth

Wanderthirst

Speak Music The Song from The Professor

The Lake Isle of Innisfree W.B. Yeats

Alison Travers

Parry

Elgar

Muriel Hubert

¹⁴⁴MS5030, music folio I, Peter Dawson mss. *Marri'd*, music: A. Harrison, words: Dame Mary Gilmore

¹⁴⁵example; Lawson, E., 1956, 01.07: heard 'Peter Dawson Sings Again with Tommy Tycho Players' 'last Saturday'; 'please don't let it "Peter Out" '. [last Saturday would have been 31.12.55, from songs noted, *Song of the River, Holy City, Nazareth*, actually 24.12.55]

¹⁴⁶e.g. ABC/AA, 1956, 06.16:Glorious Devon, Bless this House Crabbed Age & Youth Call of the Pipes

¹⁴⁷ABC/AA, 1956, 04.27

¹⁴⁸for example programme, *Messiah* 1950; the four concerts beginning 1951. 1953, 02.13, Dawson, Mrs Constance, 1952-53 diary: 'We also had morning tea with Mr Athol Lykke, & Mr Roy Lamb at Adelaide ABC'.

¹⁴⁹according to the programme, 1956, 04.28

Peter Dawson could now make good capital out of his age, as he had on London television. There is no reference to frivolous encores though they may be implied for the well-attended concert 'turned out to be a good, old-fashioned *Saturday Pop*':¹⁵⁰

The veteran Peter Dawson displays only one weakness but refuses to be beaten by it. In fact, in one of his Shakespeare songs he shook his fist in its face crying "Age, I do defy thee!"

Rising 75 Mr Dawson gave us an object lesson in how to use a voice so skilfully that it will last half a century and showed us how a born story teller can hold an audience in the hollow of his hand.

But the 1956 article, *Last song of Peter Dawson*, was prophetic. Although it may have been intended primarily as ABC publicity, it might have been a way of letting Peter Dawson know that his distinguished life had been fully recognised so he could now retire honourably. However, the evidence of payments and programme approvals show that he was still used spasmodically until 1959. The evidence¹⁵¹ indicates that he also sang on a variety of programmes - *They Gave Us*, *The Village Glee Club*, *Bandwagon*, *Argonauts*, talks and even an occasional television programme - through to the end of his life.

Television was not yet a dominant feature of Australian broadcasting. Three months after television had commenced in Australia he appeared with Dame Mary Gilmore on *Picture Page*,¹⁵² and in July 1957 sang *The Arrow and the Song* with piano accompaniment on *Twenty Five Years of Broadcasting*,¹⁵³ which was transmitted from Gore Hill (Sydney). Burgis excuses a lack of quality on failing health and the exasperating studio technique of early television, but feels that the *Anzac Memoriam* (Ford) sung in April the following year¹⁵⁴ has the old forcefulness.¹⁵⁵

When one fan began: 'In these days of such calamities as the H Bomb and Elvis Presley'¹⁵⁶ and asked him: 'would it be possible to make your final programme one of songs by that very close friend of yours, Mr McCall?' the correspondent was presaging another programme, *The Composer Speaks*. On 30 April 1958,¹⁵⁷ during the extended visit to Adelaide¹⁵⁸ Peter Dawson recorded McCall's *Boots, My Mine of Memories*, and *Waratah & Wattle*:

¹⁵⁰ABC/AA, Advertiser, 1956, 04.30

¹⁵¹mainly from pay-in slips

¹⁵²ABC/AA, 1957, 01.26

¹⁵³Burgis, 1981, 'information booklet' to Ambassador of Song: 1958, 07.07; ABC/AA, 1957,07.01 (approval)

¹⁵⁴Burgis, 1981, 'information booklet' to Ambassador of Song: 1958, 04.21, recorded "off air", piano & bugler

¹⁵⁵Burgis, 1981: 1949,12,07: Could this unpublished manuscript be *Give Me Freedom*, assigned to Peter Dawson in 1949 by D.A.(Alan) Ford, Kauri Road, Kamo Northland, NZ?

¹⁵⁶Robarts, M & J, 1957, 05.02

¹⁵⁷Burgis, 1981: 1958, 04.30 'taken from an acetate disc with no note of source but research indicates ' [this programme, this date.]

¹⁵⁸visit to Savage Club 1958, 04.49 already mentioned

exactly 60 years after Dawson commenced accepting professional engagements in his home city and [were] the very last recording we have of his voice.¹⁵⁹

Peter Dawson was visiting Adelaide as guest of honour at the Annual General Meeting of the Savage Club.¹⁶⁰ As evidenced before, he let the local broadcaster know and arranged a couple of broadcasts - *My song goes round the World* and *Melody Land* to be prerecorded.¹⁶¹ Also in evidence was that Scottish canniness, which had previously driven him to negotiate a £2 per diem travelling allowance even after he had negotiated a substantial fee. Although it was a private trip he had seen some advantage in asking the ABC to purchase the air tickets on his behalf. When asked to repay the £18.17.0 he telephoned that 'it was customary for ABC to pay fares when singing interstate', but a later note indicates that Peter Dawson had 'paid up'.

The old man was clutching at straws. When he left Sydney to settle in Adelaide an invitation to participate 'in a Sound-Radio program of reminiscences' followed him¹⁶² then the file falls silent until his death.

Peter Dawson was buried at Rookwood Cemetery. As was befitting, 'a police escort led the way' and 'more than 200 mourners followed'.¹⁶³ An era had ended, and those who were participants knew that the flag-bearer had fallen. Charles Moses wrote to Constance Dawson:¹⁶⁴

Dear Mrs Dawson,

I should like to offer, on behalf of the ABC, very sincere sympathy on the loss of your husband. All of us who had the pleasure of knowing him personally were truly grieved to hear the news.

Your husband's long association with the ABC will be gratefully remembered by our organisation. His personality endeared him to all those who were privileged to work with him, and his great talent has given pleasure to countless concert audiences and radio listeners. During his long singing career he certainly did a great deal to enhance Australia's musical reputation, and I know that many people throughout the world will hear of his passing with very real regret.

¹⁵⁹he started his professional life in April 1898?

¹⁶⁰newspaper (*Advertiser*), 1958, 04.30, *Peter Dawson on visit*

¹⁶¹ABC/AA, 1958, 04.16

¹⁶²ABC, 1959, 08, 03 in NFSA MS5030/8/49 (Sydney), for which he would be interviewed long enough to produce a one-hour broadcast - fee £50, followed him to Adelaide: 1959, 09, ?, MS5030/3/51.

¹⁶³ABC/AA, press cutting, 1961, 09.29

¹⁶⁴ABC/AA, 1961, 09.28

Chapter 6

part 1 - analysis of the repertoire

Peter Dawson's name is inextricably linked to the ballad. Despite publicity and supporting evidence of his competence in other styles, his name is not commonly associated with oratorio, opera or the higher musical genres. The review of the breadth of his repertoire will show that on the one hand it is a fallacy to restrict him to the ballad, on the other that it may ultimately be the correct perception of his true competence.

The music titles available from his concert and broadcast repertoire have been collated in order to establish the broad pattern of repertoire which he favoured throughout his professional life. These have been coupled with a further tool for examination of his repertoire, the substantial body of personal documents and music held by the National Film and Sound Archive (MS5030). Among these documents are seventeen folios of sheet music, Folio Packages A-P, including Gi, Gii, comprised in the main of personal copies of published music and a large number of his own manuscripts,¹ being either compositions or adaptations for his own use and for publication. It appears to be a random collection; there are manuscripts from every period of his life; it does not appear to have been retained for any specific purpose. To fulfil the objectives of this enquiry this music has been analysed according to a broad range of criteria, necessitating subdivision into three data bases referred to as: (a) Bibliography, (b) Analysis, (c) Comment. As songs or song cycles are generally recognised by their title the three files are in song title order.²

The Bibliography is effectively a Sheet Music Catalogue.³ Arranged in columns each entry provides: title, composer, author of the text, publisher (as available), place of publication (as available), the year or identification⁴ (as available), and, for reference back to the source, the Folio Package. In general, publisher, place of publication and year were reliably available on printed material, and Peter Dawson had dated many of the manuscripts.

The Analysis (range⁵, tempo, mood and type of song,) is essentially a

¹examples taken from these music folios unless otherwise identified. Complete listing in Bibliography 01.2. mss = manuscript or manuscripts

²these data bases could be sorted in a variety of ways such as composer, text author.

³author's generic description

⁴music does not always carry a publishing or copyright date, especially older music or music collected in albums. For example the four Litolf Loewe Albums are No. 2241 a-d - of which Peter Dawson used Volume 1; the most reliable Schubert album is Edition Peters 8725, some eight volumes of which most well-known songs are to be found in Volume 1. Publishing houses can relate this printing code to specific years.

⁵although the melody of the bulk of general songs is printed in the treble clef, male voices sound an octave lower. Strictly speaking the male voices could be written in the Bass Clef. In earlier times the tenor voice appeared in its own tenor clef, and the high soprano voice in its own clef, so that the bulk of the notes appeared within the stave. To avoid confusion by using

superficial review of elementary musical characteristics,⁶ primarily for the purpose of determining Peter Dawson's comfortable range during different periods in his career, but also for determining the character of the different musical genres, leading to the hypothesis that there could be an intrinsic similarity between those numbers which he used most frequently.

Comment is any ancillary information: dates on manuscripts, timings, orchestrations, addresses, signatures, transpositions, musical editing, reference to a recording, to a publisher, rubber-stamped information, even the price of the music and occasional personal observations.

This conglomerate documents many processes in Peter Dawson's musical life.⁷ It reveals much of the history of his vocal repertoire and the professional and commercial mores of the first half of the twentieth century. To produce these NFSA data bases 721 songs have been analysed. As there are many multiples, the number of actual titles reduces to 518. The multiplicity of similar titles seldom refers to several copies of published music: on the contrary, multiplicity may indicate revision of the same number, preparation for printing, transpositions into comfortable tessituras, arrangements of songs which appealed to him, or various stages of his own compositions.

There is evidence that Peter Dawson sang about 490⁸ of these songs, some of them many times. These 490 songs include a large number of original manuscripts, particularly his own compositions, providing an insight into his musical skills, his personal aesthetic, and, as many of his compositions were published, the popular sentiment of the period. Some of these songs form part of the 2500 titles he is reputed to have recorded, some are additional, so the depth of his repertoire, can be amply demonstrated by combining the information in the NFSA data bases - practically 20% of his repertoire - with the frequency data from other chapters. Peter Dawson's repertoire ranged through the gamut of vocal music; from opera and oratorio through lieder and art songs to ballads and songs of the lighter genres.

The material may be conveniently divided into: Old Masters, Opera, Continental Art Songs, English Art Songs, Ballads, and Folk Songs. 'So that I might record songs in a different class',⁹ he admitted, he used '*a nom de plume* for each type of song':

Peter Dawson:	Art songs, operatic, Choral, Ballad
Hector Grant:	Scottish songs of the Lauder type
Frank Danby:	Light popular songs
Will Strong:	Music-hall hits

male singer nomenclature, such as 'a low Eb' or 'a high G', range will be identified as C - a', that is C-c-c'-a'.

⁶More complex analyses: form, harmony, harmonic movement and cadential preparation could be another musical study in itself. There is enough material in this collection to support an advanced study of the vocal music in vogue from the late Victorian era to the mid-twentieth century.

⁷and by inference, of singers generally

⁸circa 25-30 mss, mostly from other composers in later years plus one or two songs too high for him.

⁹Dawson, 1951, 123

By this definition all his concert and broadcasting repertoire was true 'Peter Dawson' material, so it should be possible to support some specific observations on the nature of the material to which he was drawn, the musical parameters within which he worked, the range of the voice, his preferred tessitura, and therefore the true nature of his voice as an instrument.

It has been established that he liked to begin a programme with one of these old classical songs, the Old Masters. They established his credentials. They were not ballads. Probably the most substantial song he ever sang was the beautiful Recitative and aria from Bach's *Wachet, Betet*. It was one of only nine songs in this category, which were featured regularly. It enjoyed its vogue only in the 1930s, from the first Australian tour until his last BBC broadcast before World War 2 - at about the time he recorded *Waiata Poi*, *Waltzing Matilda* and *Bless this House*.

It is an extended, complex piece of music, which drew on his best skills at the height of his musical and technical confidence. Peter Dawson was quite capable of singing this extended sustained line, the most beautiful quality in singing and the ultimate test of technical control. But, with the exception of the lyrical *At evening, hour of calm and rest*, from Bach's *Matthew Passion*, which appeared briefly in the thirties as a substitute, this piece is isolated somewhat from those other works in this category, which enjoy a similar vigorousness.

Peter Dawson appears to have preferred something more akin to a noisy Italian overture than a contemplative approach to the beginning of a concert. The Handelian numbers, *Honour and Arms*, *Why do the nations*, *Hear me ye winds and waves*, were certainly oratorio at its best, lessons in writing for the voice. Peter Dawson's energy, his faultless articulation of coloratura passages, his low notes and a high note flourish, could be heard in most of them. Arne's innocuous *Hail Immortal Bacchus* was featured on the 1933 tour, Purcell's *Ye twice ten hundred deities* belonged to the thirties. *Why do the nations* would have been sung in his regular *Messiah* appearances, but the only post-war survivors of this classical group were Battishill's *When valiant Ammon*, and *O ruddier than the cherry*. He had probably used both continuously since his student days, because *When valiant Ammon* appears in an early Victorian Bass Album, and *O ruddier than the cherry* in later one.

The earlier volume of *Standard Vocal Albums*, produced by Bayley & Ferguson of Glasgow, published for each voice type, must have been one of the standard collections known to all teachers and students. It contained a mixture of 31 songs: folk songs, art songs, oratorio and operatic arias from the baroque era to the early nineteenth century, contemporary when it was published. It had both piano accompaniment and tonic solfa. Some of these 'old-fashioned' numbers were: *The Diver* (Loder), *The Arrow and the Song* (Balfe), *In cellar cool* (Fischer), *Drink to me only* (Old English), *Rock'd in the cradle of the deep* (Knight), *The Wolf* (Shield) all of which were so well-known that it was commercially sound to get Peter Dawson to record them early in his career.¹⁰ This album does not contain *O ruddier than the cherry*.

¹⁰in chapter 3, commentators asking were why he had not recorded [the popular] *The Wolf*.

O ruddier than the cherry appears in Boosey's 'Imperial Edition' c.1890, which was based on the older one. It was produced in the 'latter part of last century', under the 'editorship of Sir Arthur Sullivan & Josiah Pittman'; it superseded 'the earlier Edition published in collaboration with Bayley & Ferguson'.¹¹ As it also contains other 'Peter Dawson' numbers, among others: *I am a Roamer* (Mendelssohn), *She alone charmeth my sadness* (Gounod), *The Monk within his cell* (Macfarren), *Simon the Cellarer* (Hatton), and two of the few German songs he used before 1924, *The Erl King* and *The Wanderer*, both in English, it is a clear indication that both these albums were already available to student Dawson in Adelaide. This c.1890 album was finally replaced with another 'Imperial Edition' about 1950,¹² so it was a basic tool for several generations of basses, who could refer to Peter Dawson recordings when they were learning.

When Peter Dawson wrote: '*When valiant Ammon, Aria from "Almina" (1764) by Jonathan Battishill (1738-1801)*' in a programme, it was intended to create the impression that he was a musician who had done some research into the life and works of the composer. But the suspicion, in this case, as in most, is that he simply learned the song because he liked it, or because there was a demand for it. The information was simply copied from the heading in the vocal album. Although he sang about the triumphal return of the king/god Ammon from his Indian wars, it would be doubtful that he would have even known that Ammon was the god/king of Thebes, that an Ammon cult existed, that ultimately the cult merged into a Zeus/Ammon (Jupiter/Ammon) god/ruler of the heavens mythology. The attraction in this bold, extended, florid ³/₈ aria for the bass is the rolling coloratura which ranges from F#-e' and includes one extraordinary rising and falling sequence in triplets. As Peter Dawson sang the long-out-of-date aria in one of his last ABC orchestra concerts, it proves his love for the piece and his confidence that he could still sing the low notes well, for it finishes on a featured (low) G.

This feature does not exist at the end of the Purcell's *Ye twice ten hundred deities*. Unlike many arias of the time, this one does not follow the common da capo pattern, which suggest that it lead into another number, probably a chorus, in the original key. The A section, which begins with a quasi recitativo secco is suitably agile, while the B section is lyrical, leading to a weak ending. As Peter Dawson found this weak ending unsuitable for the concert platform, he has added a more acceptable finish: he has cut the last two measures of the melody and added his own seven-measure phrase leading to a long final G.¹³

As *O ruddier than the cherry* was unquestionably one of his all-time favourites, it should reveal those attributes which he most prized in a song: the pleasure of singing it and the strong impression it would make on his audience. Like Battishill's *Almena*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (1720) is not

¹¹Boosey, correspondence, 1996, 01.10

¹²Boosey, correspondence, 1996, 01.10

¹³*Ye Twice Ten Hundred Deities*: 5'15"; Peter Dawson orchestration: I Violin, II Violin, Viola, Cello, Bassi, Bassoons; 2mm Intro pasted in ; p7 final 2mm cut; ending over page; p8 7 mm melody added to low G stamp: *Peter Dawson*; *Peter Dawson* Ealing several times; address x-out in pencil.

an oratorio but a secular cantata. Handel composed three versions. It is a pity Peter Dawson did not know the first version, *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo*, because it had arias for Polifemo with an even wider range, from E^b - a^b - almost the range with which he credited himself; but then, he probably did not know the whole cantata, only this aria which C. J. Stevens would have recommended he learn. As many songs throughout his career feature his rich bass notes and as they caught the attention of Fred Gaisberg, it may be assumed that the young singer wallowed in them.

It is a characteristic of a good song that the music captures the essence of an aesthetic idea, so the singer may blindly succeed without reference to any original source. Peter Dawson may have known that the aria was sung by the giant Polyphemus, but the song could be effective without this knowledge. The cyclops, Polyphemus, fell in love with nymph Galatea, who loved the handsome youth, Acis. At the conclusion of the myth, Polyphemus clubs Acis to death, Galatea weeps over him, and the gods, taking pity, turn his body and her tears into the River Acis. The aria, however deals only with Polyphemus' early infatuation. The change from ferocious giant into wheedling supplicant is obvious in the brief recitative. His cyclopean rage is expressed immediately in a wild rising coloratura passage, 'I rage', but soon fizzles out as he exchanges his club for a puny reed pipe for his 'cap-a-cious mouth', these words descending to the featured F, like entering some vocal cavern. Polyphemus' music then simpers on for another four measures to introduce the awkwardness of the uncouth, unintelligent swain. Sung with Peter Dawson's instinctive comic humour, the grotesque *O ruddier than the cherry* would cheer any audience - as he well knew. It also warmed up his voice through the whole range without strain. Critics could not fault the technique nor could they be offended if the number bore the name of the composer of *The Messiah*. The coloratura sequences preserved the classical ambience, yet with its galloping vulgarity in both the A and B sections, and the inserted g' instead of g to finish the da capo, made it comparable to his best ballads or comic opera.

Although standard operatic arias can be found among his music, the review of his repertoire reveals that he sang relatively little opera. One of his most favoured arias, *Away with philandering*, (*Non piu andrai*) has already been discussed. Operatically speaking it should be sung by a basso cantante, not a heavy bass. Figaro needs an F in ensemble, an f' in the first aria and an ability to sing repeated awkward e' in the final aria. The role was originally sung by a bass, but as that was a generic term, it could be sung by a baritone. But, although the ranges are rather similar, Figaro should have a contrasting vocal quality to the definitely baritone Count.

O Star of Eve (Wagner), which Peter Dawson could have learnt from the oldest album, has such a restricted range, that it could appeal to any lightish bass-baritone who first learnt the music out of context. Compared with other songs ideally suited to the bass, the tessitura lies more comfortably for a baritone. One of the deceptions of singing selected numbers is the implication that the singer is familiar with and could sing the whole role. *O Star of Eve* is a good example. This same singer also sang the heavy bass aria, *Within these hallowed portals* (*In diesen heiligen Hallen*) from *The*

Magic Flute in concert¹⁴ at the same time as he recorded *O Star of Eve*,¹⁵ an indicator that the songs were chosen at random, for a highish bass with good low notes could sing either aria, but never cope with either role.

While the old masters and *Non piu andrai* suggest that even in his prime the singer was a bass or bass-baritone, his reputation as a baritone leads to the expectation that he would be most effective in the great baritone arias. Indeed, although opera does not play a significant role in his output, he was praised for his recording of several great standards: *Eri tu* (Masked Ball), *The Prologue* (Pagliacci), *Pari siamo* (Rigoletto), *Credo* (Otello), and the then fashionable *Vision fugitive* (Hérodiade) - which could all be found together, probably in the Ricordi Baritone aria collection. In the opera house these arias would be in the same *fach*, whereas his most popular aria, *Largo al factotum*, would be sung by a different, lighter, less dramatic baritone.¹⁶ The study of these arias reveals some curious practices of both the artist and the recording industry.

Peter Dawson did not sing any of these baritone arias in the original key! All have been transposed. Transposition was one of Peter Dawson's standard tools. If he wanted to sing something which was too high, he had the facility to write it out in a more comfortable key.¹⁷ Some transpositions date from his earliest days, some indicate that a lower key was more comfortable in later life. In MS5030 sixty transpositions can be identified.

Despite his anecdote that he had commenced Rossini's *Largo al factotum* in Italian on one occasion, the evidence indicates that Peter Dawson normally sang in English.¹⁸ It had such a universal appeal that he could use it for recording, promenade concerts, tours, broadcasts and the music-hall. It suited his facile technique, particularly his clarity of diction which has never been surpassed. The aria is notoriously high. In the opera it has a long, lively introduction before Figaro the barber arrives on the scene; in fact, he announces himself back-stage with a few 'lalalaleras', as if he were still in another street. The original is in C major, but to appeal to drawing room singers with their 'natural range' voices, the popular aria was published, a tone lower, in B^b, without the traditional high notes affected by operatic baritones.¹⁹ Peter Dawson always sang *Largo al factotum* in B^b.²⁰

¹⁴1909 tour. Optional E, not from Mozart, was customary on last note.

¹⁵January, 1906

¹⁶indicating again the haphazard nature of choice of repertoire: chosen if the notes were comfortable, with no reference to context

¹⁷This method was applied to any music, not restricted to arias. For example: *Where e'er you walk* [written for tenor or more precisely, counter-tenor] [low tessitura; much used] Peter Dawson hw mss, 4'; note: original key Ab; stamp: *Peter Dawson*; Peter Dawson hw: Transposed 8.12.49 South Atlantic J. P. McCall later in red biro: ss "Dominion Monark"; *Drake*, M: Richard Henty, W: W. Hewlett, Peter Dawson mss, London. Alterations: Peter Dawson hw mss 3'30"; on front Peter Dawson: in D minor; "original key G"; Mildura, Victoria, Australia 27.4.49 date in pencil: 1942; stamp: *Peter Dawson*

¹⁸appears under various English titles, for example, *The Barber's Song*, *Hey! For the Factotum*

¹⁹*Lo! The Factotum*, the favourite Buffo Song sung in Rossini's celebrated Opera *Il Barbiere di Seviglia*, The Words by C. Cummins, London, Ashdown. n.d.

²⁰Peter Dawson mss, [much used] *Largo al factotum* orchestration in B^b: orchestral parts Peter Dawson hw: V1 x 2 V2 x 2 Va C x 2 B Fl x 2 (Piccolo) Cl x 2 Bn x 2 Cornet x 2 Tromb x 2 Tymp Bb F original parts; 1 pasted on; Peter Dawson printed: *Peter Dawson* title on edge

Eri tu is 'transposed a tone down'. *Vision Fugitive* is even more complicated: one copy is a printed version transposed down a tone and a half, for Bass; another Peter Dawson manuscript is transposed up a tone from the Bass version, that is, half a tone lower than the original baritone key; the French has been translated into English, though not in Peter Dawson's handwriting, but Peter Dawson has dated it himself: 'P. Dawson, Red Sea April 10th 1931', that is, when he was sailing to Australia for the 1931 tour. There is yet a third manuscript signed 'Peter Dawson', which is half a tone higher again, that is, in the original key. It appears to have been well used, which suggests that, when he started on his professional career, he could sing it in this key, but in his prime found lower keys more comfortable.

He always sang his famous *Prologue from Pagliacci* in a lower key than the original C. The two Peter Dawson versions available are most complex: measures are cut, words altered, internal key changes not corresponding to the original. A printed version in B^b, with a range A-d[#], has a long piano introduction corresponding to the opera, but a sign 'Begin here' indicates that it was cut to a minimum. Similarly a blue pencil mark indicates that the piano was not to play the postlude, but finish one measure after the voice.

What appears to be the definitive version is entirely handwritten. This piece is worth a study in itself, for generations of baritones, who have been affected by it, would be surprised to find how much this familiar version is at variance with the opera. The English words are the old-fashioned Weatherley words - known to every singer, student, teacher or follower of aria competitions - which stem from the Ashdown drawing room publication: London 1893, which Peter Dawson had begun to doctor. Peter Dawson's definitive version is not in the original C either: it begins in C^b, a semitone higher than the drawing room version, but it does end in the same B^b, which meant a bit of musical hop-scotch at the change to the conclusion.²¹

Another group not readily associated with Peter Dawson are continental art songs. To be correct, a few of Peter Dawson's favourite songs, *The Erl King*, *Edward*, Russian songs by Tschaiowsky or Moussorgsky, or Schubert's beautiful *Who is Sylvia*, and another Loewe ballad, *The Clock*, which, like *My Grandfather's Clock*, accompanies the protagonist from birth to death, should be grouped in this category but they endured throughout his career

²¹*Prologue from Pagliacci*, Peter Dawson mss: 4'15"; C^b [a semitone lower than original C], Opening key sign incorrect but notes are correct, shown as G^b, should be C^b; p8 printed version begins with spoken text over piano melody, but voice has melody in manuscript; p6: printed B^b raised to C^b in manuscript; p11: optional note, d', of printed version not included in manuscript; p12: one mm 'bitter laugh...' becomes 3mm over stet accomp; p13: 'passion' drop 8va on 'pass' [creates a dramatic leap d-d', instead of 2 x d]; p14, m6: melody altered: g[#] a[#] b f[#] (pause) g[#] d[#] e becomes 8va a b c' e' (pause) c' g a; p14 mm 8-9 key signature was B becomes B^b to the end of the piece but these two mm actually in C; layout manuscript p9 copies printed p14: transposition to C continues until final voice note on tonic B^b; piece ends in B^b, final 5 mm (p9, mm8-9; p10, mm1-3) actually same as printed version; p10, m3 f' substituted for c'; finishes on B^b; postlude 9mm = printed cut 6mm. [Note: the return to the original key means that most of the piece is up a semitone from Ashdown except finish, which reverts.]

because he always sang them in English and treated them effectively as English art songs or ballads. The other French art songs and German lieder enjoyed a relatively short vogue. Gerald Moore and his contemporaries may have wished this material on Peter Dawson because they believed that his technique warranted greater musical challenges; his use of the 1924 and 1928 recital material did raise his musical profile, but in the end it was out of character.

It would appear that he had no elemental empathy with foreign languages, for the excellent material was restricted principally to the 1931 and 1933 tours to Australia and his BBC broadcasts in this period. This may be unjust. Perhaps he thoroughly enjoyed the music, but, as Vose suggests, was constrained to be pragmatic:²²

Dawson had stuck to his tried and trusted blend of classical songs and popular ballads, except for one broadcast in 1932 (the actual date does not appear on B.B.C. archive papers), when he sang German Lieder by Schubert, a song by Bach, and *On the brow of Richmond Hill* by Purcell. Artistically, it was successful and deeply satisfying to Peter. The B.B.C. postbag was not, however, a source of comfort. Such letters as "What the devil is Peter Dawson doing singing German rubbish!" and "Has Dawson lost his head? What about the good old ballads of the open road? I don't even mind a bit of opera if it's got a good tune to it, but this German stuff is beyond my scope. I am a simple man who likes good simple tuneful songs. Leave German to the Germans I say and let's have *Boots* and the rest of 'em."

The actual dates when Peter Dawson used German lieder are available; they were included in seven programmes between 1932 and 1934. The lieder were mixed in with a variety of material, which invariably concluded with a *Boots*-type composition. So the anecdote is of questionable validity, but it does support the proposition that he was a realist, who had to:

come to terms with the fact that he was branded as a 'Popular' singer. It was a bitter pill but he knew in his heart that he had to swallow it.

All his recording and concert experience, all the reviews and interviews indicate quite clearly that Peter Dawson had known since his early days that he was a popular singer. If anything the critics greatest gripe was that he was too popular. Lieder were quite appropriate for BBC broadcasts but with the wealth of material available Peter Dawson sensibly left them to others and promoted English art songs and the ballads with which he was most comfortable.

If English art songs needed a champion they found one in Peter Dawson. 'Why trouble to learn all these foreign songs?' he asked. 'We have British Lieder every whit as good'²³ and names John Ireland, Arnold Bax, Armstrong Gibbs, Thomas Dunhill and Roger Quilter as examples.²⁴ On the

²²Vose, 1987, 133

²³Dawson, 1951, 187

²⁴surprisingly similar to those names in newspaper, 1927, 06.17: *British Songs for Britain* by Peter Dawson The Famous Bass-Baritone, already cited, being: 'plenty of English composers

following page he lists another eighteen composers, most of them among the fifty or so collated from his performance repertoire.

Peter Dawson makes a good point. There is the danger that just by putting a piece by Schubert, Schumann or Brahms into a programme it is presumed to be better than any by an English composer. Elgar's *Speak Music*, Bax's *Rann of Exile*, Landon Ronald's *Lament of Shah Jehan*, or Vaughan William's *Songs of Travel*, to begin to name a few, are every bit as good as some of those six hundred songs of Schubert's that are never heard, the last compositions of Schumann or the little folk songs of Brahms. No composer wrote only great music; a name is a convenient short-hand for overall quality; it is not meant to blind musical perception.

At one end, musically, English art songs are the work of musical colossi; at the other there is little to differentiate them from the popular ballads. Peter Dawson argued that they were more like scenes than stories, but there is a common heritage for English song, which blurs any borders; the quality of the music alone sets them apart as art songs. Even this criterion is specious, for English art songs range through the gamut of emotions; how can the music of a dramatic song be compared to that of an amusing song? How can *Lament of Shah Jehan* be compared to Edward German's *Rolling down to Rio*, *Speak Music* to Armstrong Gibbs' *Five Eyes*.²⁵

From his documents *Lament of Shah Jehan* could not be dated. The basic manuscript is old and a publisher, Enoch, is noted. There is evidence of relatively recent use²⁶ as newer manuscript is pasted over the first ten measures. The composition, marked 'adante' [sic], begins in C minor but ends in C major; with a range from A^b-e', a very comfortable range for a baritone.

Edward German's lively *Rolling Down to Rio* is based on a Kipling poem. The humour is captured in words like the beginning of the second verse 'I've never seen a Jag-u-ar, nor yet an arm-a-dill-o', the latter word delightfully syncopated, with rising roulades word-painting 'roll-'. The composition, published in 1904, begins in A minor, ends in A; the range a restricted c-e', with the e' merely touched in the runs. One of those tiny gems that finish a programme or make good encores in any class of concert. *Speak Music* (1902) is meant to be a 'significant' piece; inferred not only in the composer's name and the side information 'from *The Professor ...*', but from the strange ¹⁵8 metre. Marked *allegretto comodo*, it is relatively short (2'45") with a limited range (d-e'), but to learn the awkward music the singer has been constrained to divide every measure after the sixth quaver.²⁷ Beginning 'Speak music and bring me fancies too fleet for me', it praises music, albeit more sentimentally, in the same vein as Schubert's *An die Musik* ('Du holder Kunst ...'). With a lesser composer it could be maudlin for the music follows the 'voice' as it soars 'heavenwards' to 'pray for me'; the energy is then reversed to lead via a quiet *piu tranquillo* to 'wondering

every bit as good as foreigners, for example John Ireland, Arnold Bax, Armstrong Gibbs, Thomas Dunhill'

²⁵not in MS5030 but Dawson, 1951, 187

²⁶he used in his last BBC and ABC series.

²⁷still awkward; could be seen as 5 groups of three. groupings were almost invariably 2, 3, 4, 6 usually seen as 2 x 3, 9 as 3 x 3; groups of 5 or 7 were very rare in vocal music of this era.

bid me rest', the ultimate 'rest' hanging in the air on the fifth instead of the tonic. It is a beautiful art song, which should serve to dispel the conception of Peter Dawson, popular balladist, for music of this quality was the substance of his well-attended concerts.

The conception of Peter Dawson as the virile singer of stirring ballads in a marching tempo is further undermined if credit is given to the large number of English art songs which are lyrical or gently amusing. 'In Hans old mill' *Five Eyes* belong to 'his three black cats', for 'Jill' has only one. Within a very constricted range, the crisp, humorous music catches the onomatopoeic, ABA chase after 'thieving rats' perfectly. A song anyone could sing; a soufflé.

The Fairy Lough by Charles Villiers Stanford (Boosey, 1901), was an Irish song. Relatively short, 2'30", an easy range, A-e^b, marked *andante molto tranquillo* - though Peter Dawson has written 'move along' - it would have been used as an amiable contrast to more stirring material.²⁸ Changing to his Scottish accent, Hubert Parry's *A Fairy Town*, being St. Andrews, served as a light-hearted (*allegretto scherzando*) equivalent of the Irish number. Only two minutes long, with a restricted, but definitely baritone range, B^b-f', to which Peter Dawson has added another optional f' as an effect high note²⁹ to finish.

His repertoire in this category embraces many texts which are not sentimental but sweeping poetic gestures. *Lake Isle of Innisfree* (Muriel Herbert), for example, is a musical setting of a W. B. Yeats poem, which Peter Dawson had sung since it first appeared in 1928. Published in D, with a range D-e', Peter Dawson has noted 'play in D flat, Time 2.15', which probably signifies its re-use in his later years as the original range and tessitura would have been comfortable in the 'thirties'.

Arthur Somervell's 1904 *Loveliest of Trees the Cherry Now* is one of the most lyrical settings of one of A. E. Housman's bucolic poems. From many of the publishing dates it can be seen that Peter Dawson had inherited his baritone repertoire from Santley's generation and prolonged its usage. Originally in E (B-d[#]'), Peter Dawson has marked it E^b (=B^b-d'). As either range would be easy for him, the marking suggests not only a later adjustment, but also indicates that he wanted to sing the song as gently as possible by placing the piano finish in the easiest part of his voice.

The 1923 Gustav Holst composition, *Lovely Kind and Kindly Loving*, is another short song, 'Time 1³/₄', which remained in his repertoire to the last. Peter Dawson has marked it 'finishing in F' on the cover. As the song begins in F this marking indicates key changes during the song, quite typical of this composer, who was adventurous compared with his contemporaries. The song is in a comfortable baritone range, B-f', which again confirms Peter Dawson's vocal comfort-zone.

One song, which was often used after 1930 was *If music be the food of love*. Peter Dawson had his standard group of 'Shakespeare songs', but Alison Travers' 1930 publication could be seen to have had such a full Peter Dawson treatment that it was tempting to consider whether the name was

²⁸an probably sung with an Irish brogue

²⁹the term 'effect' note coined by author to indicate a note inserted - usually at the conclusion of a song - to give a dramatic effect.

in fact one of his pseudonyms. He has certainly transposed the song, added effect notes, cut some measures and made an orchestral arrangement. Even when transposed the range was a comfortable C-e', but to give the gentle song more impact without altering its character, Peter Dawson has added a low G then F, instead of c on the word 'fancy'. The work is signed: *Transposed PD 18.8.32 Original Key A Flat Transposed to F natural and abridged*. It is stamped: *Peter Dawson Ealing* - and added at sometime in pencil: *J. P. McCall*.³⁰

Another favourite was *Onaway, Awake, Beloved* with text from Longfellow's epic romantic ballad *Hiawatha*. It was one of two songs he featured by Frederick Cowen, the other being *Border Ballad* to the text of Sir Walter Scott, to which he felt drawn by his Scottish ancestry. It is possible that he knew them early in his career, for *Border Ballad* was published in 1895, and *Onaway*, published by Metzler in London in 1892, was also available from Allan's in Melbourne.

Onaway, (allegretto), lies comfortably between C-f', and despite frequent usage shows little sign of tampering: an upbeat to the high f' has been deleted at some time and a b with a pause sign added before the penultimate note rising to the cadential resolution - not a dramatic ending.

Border Ballad is of particular interest for it turns out to be a Scottish folk song, *The Blue Bonnets*, which appears as a Peter Dawson manuscript in a slightly different arrangement. The range of *Border Ballad* is C-e'; Peter Dawson has marked the song in his copy of Ferrie's 83 Scottish Songs³¹ 'Music: in E^b', that is B^b-e^b'. Peter Dawson's predilection for Scottish songs has already been noted; he even suggested that he make a programme of them for the BBC in 1938.³² Many songs in this Ferrie collection are marked, some he has arranged. A sample from those marked:³³ *Annie Laurie*: 3'30", in A flat; *Gala Water*: pencil D^b; *Land o' the Leal*: in G (crossed out), in A flat; *Lochnagar*: Ab, V1, V3; *March, Ettrich and Teviotdale*: underlined in 'Contents'; and *March of the Cameron Men*: in A flat, optional e^b added '3rd time' four measures before the end as a flourish.³⁴

There is plenty of evidence of Peter Dawson's affection for folk song, traditional songs or anonymous songs.³⁵ Folk song was obviously a great

³⁰p2, mm8-9: blue pencil cut, mm11-13 ms added, p3, mm1-6 ms added (incorrect rhythm m2), p4, mm1-4 ms added, mm12-13 mms accomp added, p5, mm1 ms added, m8 low G F added instead of C on word fancy; evidence also of orch arr., manilla cover, urh "If music be" Alison Travers, Time 2'15"; and on p1 a variation on the quote: If Music Be the Food of Love Published by Boosey & Co Ltd Copyright 1930 (To Doreen Marsten) Original Key (A flat) minor third Transposed Peter Dawson. 18.8.32.

³¹album, n.d.: *Ferrie's 83 Scottish Songs (Old & New)*;; arranged Patterson, p51. Above Preface: "With the best wishes of the editor Alexander Patterson"

³²BBC, 1938, 03.25: (typed) Peter Dawson has suggested that he does a Scottish programme. What do you think about it? (typed) We would like another date from Peter Dawson later on, but I don't think that specialisation on Scottish songs is desirable.

³³p72, p67, p98, p19, p96, p51

³⁴*March of the Cameron Men* appears as a Peter Dawson mss; also another collection, P&S 84, pp39-42

³⁵as examples, other songs from performance programmes; Peter Dawson had the habit of using the poet's name if he knew it, rather than trad. or anon.:

The Bonnie Earl o' Moray (Lawson)

The De'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman (Burns)

source of pleasure and inspiration for him. As many can be found in his repertoire they would have helped mould his musical and aesthetic taste. It is reasonable to presume that, like other drawing room material, they were common parlance in his family as he grew up. Although not important in proportion to other material, they provide the musical transition to more sophisticated ballads and art-songs.

As the border between folk-song and ballad can only be arbitrary, so the border between English art songs and ballads is also tenuous. One of Peter Dawson's favourite 'ballads', *The Kerry Dance*, is not sentimental in the saccharine sense, but a lively, pleasant number with an Irish lilt; though too cultivated for a folk-song it shows its musical antecedents clearly. Yet a somewhat similar idea in the hands of good composer becomes an art-song that can stand beside any. It is indicative of Peter Dawson's musical taste that he should be sensitive to the musical qualities of Arnold Bax's 1922 *Rann of Exile*. In A minor, in an easy baritone tessitura, essentially d-e'; the time signature is not marked at the beginning, but shown simply throughout as 4, 2, 3, with changing tempi. The composer has evolved his unpredictable rhythm by concentrating on the 'wail' in Padraig Colm's poem, which finishes:

O Con! before our people knew the scatt'ring of the dearth,
before they saw potatoes rot and melt black in the earth,
I might have stood in Connacht on the top of Crunachmaelinn,
and all around me I would see the hundreds of my kin.

This musical wail, a complex arhythmic figure of triplets and quavers evolving from the high baritone e', is played to introduce the song, and sung on 'O'. The phrase touches the high g' before descending to the melodic a, on 'con!'. The song finishes on the strong triumphant d', favoured as a flourish in so many baritone songs. Then the composer has added the wail on octave lower as a brief postlude, an echo of the poet's pain.

Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*³⁶ are fine English art songs as are Charles Villiers Stanford's *Songs of the Sea*. It is no coincidence if *The Songs of Travel* cycle bears some affinity to folk song for Vaughan Williams was not only an avid collector of folk-songs but based his opera, *Hugh the Drover*, on folk-tunes and a folk story. In *Songs of Travel* their influence is heard in the idiosyncratic use of pentatonic harmonies derived from his studies of the genre. Most of the Robert Louis Stevenson poems have been set with a gentle lyrical quality, superb examples of English music, which

Gae bring to me a pint o' wine (Burns)
The Laird o' Cockpen (Lady Nairne)
Loch Lomond (anon.)
Scots wha hae (trad.)
The Year that's awa' (trad.)
Mother Macree (anon.)
The Mountains of Mourne (anon.)
Drink to me only with thine eyes (anon.)
Green grow the Rushes O! (trad.)

³⁶Boosey, London, 1905

bear comparison with Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer*. No less than all those wayfarers, who tramp through German romantic literature, the English tramp or the Australian swaggie begins his journey optimistically, becoming sentimental as night falls like a black curtain around the campfire which lights his fantasy. So *Songs of Travel* begins with a pastoral marching ballad, *The Vagabond*.³⁷ Many popular ballads are similarly constructed: alternating verses, the middle verse in a minor key to indicate a longing or sadness of the 'Nights-are-cold,-maybe-I-am-growing-old' variety, before bursting into the positive sunshine of 'glad-to-be-alive'³⁸ in the next; but there is a musical quality which isolates this song from its popular counterparts.

'Peter Dawson, perhaps the most successful robust life-on-the-open-road baritone of his age'³⁹ was also ideally suited vocally and temperamentally to Stanford's sea-faring cycle for baritone and choir,⁴⁰ which he often sang. Two copies of his music indicate that he sang No. 1 *Drake's Drum*, No. 2 *Outward Bound*, No. 3 *Devon, O Devon*, and No. 5 *Old Superb*. Some of the markings are:

The Old Superb, pp28-40. In B^b, range B^b-e^b, tempo C, allegro vivace. Allegro vivace circled in blue; p31: *colla, ten*, turn over chords added, p38: from m7 covered with manuscript to p39; p40: pen accents; indication that ending without chorus has been used.

Drake's Drum. No.1. p2-9. Dm, C-e', C, tempo di marcia, with chorus. p2:, m5 *cut this bar*; p3: blue pencil: crescendo sign, p4: m1 *p* deleted *f* entered, m4 *RALL*, m5 *tempo*, m9 *cut this bar*; p6: m3rit-, m4 *ten-*, m5 *tempo*; p8: m6 pause sign, p9: m2-7 *cut to m8 here, tempo*, diminuendo sign, p2: signature *Peter Dawson*.

It is but a small step from Stanford's *Songs of the Sea* and Vaughan Williams' *The Vagabond* to the best of the popular ballads and the bulk of Peter Dawson's own compositions.

No matter what pretensions he may have had, to his contemporaries Peter Dawson was the definitive singer in the popular ballad style:⁴¹

the outstanding ballad singer of his day. He was unrivalled. His hearty singing of Kipling ballads, sea-songs and Empire songs of patriotism tend to make his admirers lose sight of the fact that his baritone was a voice of exceptional beauty; it had an intrinsic quality that made an immediate impact on the listener even on those (to us now) old fashioned wax discs, when the rough and ready horn was the only agent between the singer and the control room.

When an article appeared in the Gramophone Company house magazine⁴²

³⁷*The Vagabond*, Cm, C-e^b, C [common time], allegro moderato (alla marcia)

³⁸from the later hit *Wandering the King's Highway* published London: Chappell, 1935, to which reference has already been made as a baritone staple.

³⁹Marsh, Leslie, 1959, 11.02, *The Price of a Song*,

⁴⁰Boosey, London, 1904

⁴¹Gerald Moore, hw, to Ron Hughes PDAS, c.1961, sometime after Peter Dawson's death.

⁴²EMI, *The Voice*: Vol 21, No.8, August 1937, p.12 (in *The Voice*: Vol 10, No.2, February 1926, pp.12-13; most of the information was exactly the same)

that 'for more than 30 years a Peter Dawson record of an English ballad has been the accepted standard', there was a glib presumption that every reader had the same perception of this musical idiom with which Peter Dawson's name had become irrevocably associated. As the review of repertoire to this point indicates a broader spectrum, the term 'ballad' warrants closer scrutiny.

The ballad belonged to the Victorian era. Many of the songs which Peter Dawson made famous, songs which feature in his repertoire until his final years, stem from the previous century. *The Holy City*, was written by Michael Maybrick, under the nom-de-plume of Stephan Adams, for the tenor Edward Lloyd, a contemporary of Santley; Amy Woodforde-Finden's four *Indian Love Lyrics* enjoyed 'enormous sales here and in America'; Liza Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden*, better known to basses for its demanding and effective *Myself when young*, 'was a big success'; Madame d'Hardelot had a 'string of successes', including the hit, *Because*, which Boosey did not have the perspicacity to publish;⁴³ and Boosey actually 'found the words of *An Old Garden*' and sent them to Hope Temple, 'one of the most beautiful girls in London'.⁴⁴ And dominating the authors, Fred Weatherly.

Their form was simple: 'each stanza has an introduction giving the first few measures of the main tune, the tune is then sung, returning near the end of the stanza after an episode in a related key'.⁴⁵ More explicitly:

often in a form consisting of two or more 16-measure strophes, each followed by an 8-measure (or multiple thereof) refrain, the whole sometimes referred to as a ballad or song with chorus⁴⁶

As Boosey and Chappell and other publishers were fully aware, these were the 'pop' songs of the era. Ballads sales could be counted in millions.⁴⁷

As a study of Peter Dawson's repertoire confirms, 'the nature of drawing room ballads made them notably a sphere where lady composers flourished: Liza Lehmann, Frances Allitsen, Florence Aylward, Teresa del Riego, Guy d'Hardelot, and Amy Woodforde-Finden were some of the better-known composers'.⁴⁸

In 1959, toward the end of Peter Dawson's life, Leslie Marsh set the scene as he recalled the days of do-it-yourself music in the satirical magazine, *Punch Almanack*:⁴⁹

"Some enchanted evening" ... they were all enchanted evenings ... those nights of gladness before wireless came when people sang and played to amuse themselves at home; when that rather diffident young artied

⁴³Boosey, 1931, 29 - published by Chappell

⁴⁴Boosey, 1931, 18-29. Publishing dates available: *Holy City*, Boosey, 1892, *Myself when Young*, Boosey, 1896, *Indian Love Lyrics*, Boosey 1903.

⁴⁵Temperley, N., 1980, 'The English Sentimental Ballad' in *New Groves*

⁴⁶Randel (ed), 1986, 'Ballad' in *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*

⁴⁷Temperley, 1980: 'but none perhaps equalled the popularity of 'Home, sweet home' (1823) when promoted by Jenny Lind

⁴⁸Gammond, 1984; also Marsh, 1959: 'May Brahe (Bless This House, I passed by Your Window, and many more) was at one time drawing £4000 a year in performing rights ...

⁴⁹Marsh, 1959, *The Price of a Song*, subtitled 'Recalling the days of do-it-yourself music'

attorney put a bit of panache into "I am the Gallant Bandolero" and the austere literary guild secretary let herself go at "Dearest, the night is over, ended the dream divine" as if she really meant it, though known to have never slept outside the parental roof except once at a Ruskin Fellowship rally ...

'Age did not wither: the Indian Love Lyrics - they were the sine qua non, the ne plus ultra, no cliché is too strong for them'.

The lusty young tennis club treasurer who avowed that "Her beauty makes me swoon as the moghr trees at noon intoxicate the hot and quivering air" must have toughened up a bit by the time, in late middle age, he reluctantly abandoned "The Temple Bells," finding the high notes tiresome.

Today Sir Arthur Sullivan may be best remembered for his collaborations with Sir William Gilbert but hardly any baritone would be unfamiliar with *The Lost Chord*, or any church-goer with *Onward Christian Soldiers*. Less well-known is *The Absent-minded Beggar*, "a tune guaranteed to pull the teeth out of barrel-organs",⁵⁰ which sold a quarter of a million copies for a Boer War troops' fund before the advent of the gramophone.

If 'Peter Dawson perhaps the most successful robust life-on-the-open-road baritone of his age'⁵¹ had not existed the talking machine industry would have created him, for it needed an ideal, medium range, masculine voice to purvey this popular music to all the drawing room singers,⁵² who recognised themselves when he sang, for example, settings of Fred Weatherley's words: 'Up From Somerset, The Holy City, Danny Boy and half a column more of *Who's Who*'.⁵³

Other songs, which Marsh recalled, among them *Roses of Picardy*, *Because*, *The End of a Perfect Day*, *Soldiers of the Queen*, *Bird Songs at Eventide*, *Show Me the Way to Go Home*, *The Old Tattered Flag*, *Come To the Fair*, *Count Your Blessings*, were all 'Peter Dawson ballads'.

Peter Dawson, 'probably England's best-known singer of "ballads" ', blamed the advent of radio, the gramophone and the war for the death of those 'Ballads we once endured'.⁵⁴ "Gone are *The Bandolero* and *The Bedouin's Love Song*" argued this down-to-earth singer, who had thrived on the great pot-boilers. "People now look for sensible words wedded to music that may not be 'melodious' in the saccharine sense, but means something", he explained, and listed the 'new' the English art-song composers, which now formed the substance of his concert repertoire.

While the study of Peter Dawson's repertoire reveals a fascinating diversity,

⁵⁰Marsh, 1959, quoting Kipling, who had written the poem.

⁵¹Marsh, 1959

⁵²author's opinion but c/f Marsh, 1959: i) composer John Coates formula: "A lyric with human appeal, melody within the compass of the average voice, pianoforte accompaniment that anybody can try, must sound pleasant even to a musician."; ii) G. H. Clutsam, the composer of "My Curly-Headed Babby" advanced the cynical theory that all well-known tunes were well-worn plan and described a smasheroo new number as "Prescription No. A/24 - about 1860"

⁵³Marsh, 1959

⁵⁴London newspaper, *Daily News*, n.d. *Ballads we once endured*

for his listening audience his name was only synonymous with the ballads they wanted to hear:⁵⁵

that musical abortion, "Jazz", which emanated from the jungle has had its day ... the new popular songs are distinctly in ballad form. Is there a revival? There definitely is.

The songs that outlived the last slump are increasing in sales again, namely, "Bless This House", "The Old Violin", "Trees", "Song of Songs" and the old stagers, "For you alone" and "Harvester's Night Song" and - here I think the publishers must say "thanks" to the gramophone records makers - the new ballads are forging ahead with such artists as Peter Dawson singing "Man in the Street", "Good Green Acres"

The range of material is so diverse yet has a basic simplicity: one or more verses, each with a refrain, the last with an effect note to conclude. Each tune may be recognised individually but the structure of the songs is surprisingly similar. The marching quality of a *Sergeant Major's on Parade* is no different to *Old Father Thames; With a Shillelagh Under Me Arm*, or *Phil the Fluters Ball* differ little in essence from *On the Road to Gundagai*. The lugubrious Cobbler with his needle and thread is mirrored in Lisa Lehmann's setting of Omar Khayyám, 'Myself when young did eagerly frequent ...' with its sepulchral low-note ending. His favourite 'O for the days of the Kerry dancing' is not far removed from 'We all come up from Somerset', or from 'Devon, in Devon, glorious Devon'.

Because he made 'I travel the road, who cares' very famous, it could be expected that Peter Dawson would have had made more of a flourish at the conclusion of the song than the bland non-ending of the printed music. Indeed, his copy of the music⁵⁶ shows that he jumped the octave to make the same sort of effect as he does on most of those perennials.

His oft-recorded, extraordinarily popular encore, *The Floral Dance*, which epitomises these 'ballads', is actually musically a little different from the bulk of these songs. It is a verse song, with the obligatory introductory measures, but its rumbling, monotone 'there was the band with the curious tone ...', gives it some individuality. This passage, which the composer has raised an octave in the final verse - until it threatens to get out of reach of a medium voice at 'fiddle' - leads into a coda 'dancing, here, dancing there ...', giving enough musical variety and interest to allow its blunt, simple ending on 'Hurrah, for the Cornish Floral Dance!' to be effective. Even here, where it is completely unnecessary, Peter Dawson bombards the listener with an obligatory high note.

Although it has been demonstrated that 'it is a fallacy to restrict him to the ballad' a review of his compositions reveals his true empathy. Often mentioned, never reviewed at length, all Peter Dawson's compositions fall into the category: 'popular ballad'. So it could be assumed that he turned his hand to composition after he had become the established singer in this

⁵⁵London newspaper, 1935 11.00: *The Ballad Comes Back*- reprinted from *Sound Wave*

⁵⁶*I travel the Road, who cares* (b): in biro 2nd time final descending phrase altered to rising phrase: D, G, C ('road who cares') copy carries serious photo of Peter Dawson and sung by Peter Dawson.

genre; it could be assumed that after performing so many songs in this category, the time came when he felt that he could compose them too.

In fact, the first extant composition, *In Memorium* [sic] of Daniel Dawson, dates from his student days: 'Dect 31st 03'. The first identified publication, *Sun and Song*, which he 'dedicated to Charles Santley', was published under his own name in 1904.⁵⁷ Writing music was a steady occupation during his entire life: a photograph shows him composing at the piano at age 75,⁵⁸ and he was working on *Moonlight Fancy* when he was 77.⁵⁹

Fifty-nine compositions, of which more than thirty were published, plus about one dozen arrangements, have been identified.⁶⁰ There is no doubt as to whether the script of both words and/or music is in Peter Dawson's writing: after seeing his penmanship on masses of music and documents it became quite distinctive. One can recognise his writing whether he signs Peter Dawson, J. P. McCall or any other name.

When Chappell advertised *Wandering The King's Highway* - the poor musician's *The Vagabond*, still part of the repertoire of every budding and bathroom baritone - these 'recent publications' also included:

<i>The Prentice Lads o' Cheap</i>	J. P. McCall
<i>The Three Souls</i>	J. P. McCall
<i>The Lord is King</i>	J. P. McCall
<i>Westward Ho!</i>	J. P. McCall
<i>Boots</i>	J. P. McCall
<i>Cells</i>	J. P. McCall
<i>Tramping through the Countryside</i>	Peter Allison

Why Peter Dawson seldom composed under his own name is not clear; in his book he admits to the aliases J. P. McCall, Peter Allitson, Evelyn Bird, Denton Toms, Charles Webber, Arnold Flint, Gilbert Munday, Geoffrey Baxter, and Alison Miller. He claimed that he merely kept his identity secret from other baritones, so that they would not be prejudiced against using his works - a curious conception when publishers were pleased to use his name on other composers' sheet music to heighten its saleability. Perhaps the reason was more complicated: perhaps he felt a programme looked better when he listed a variety of composers rather than himself; perhaps he thought the association of his name with composition would jeopardise his fame as a singer; perhaps it had a bearing on royalties; perhaps it was his teasing humour. Though examples of the use of many of these pseudonyms may be found among his documents the reason is never explained.

Hector Grant

His use of Hector Grant has been explained in Chapter 3; the short period at the beginning of his career, when he donned his Scottish costume to tour the music-halls and recorded Harry Lauder-type songs. If Peter Dawson had

⁵⁷*Sun and Song*, Music: Peter Dawson, Words: C. Bingham, Elkin, London, 1904

⁵⁸newspaper 1957, 11.25: photograph in *Pictorial Show*,

⁵⁹Burgis: note from 1982 Exhibition: '*Moonlight Fancy* one of Dawson's last compositions, begun in 1959, when he was 77 years old.'

⁶⁰number not finite; possibly more.

any aspirations as a composer it was a logical step to compose appropriate music for Hector Grant while demand was running hot. Together with one drawing of Peter Dawson as Hector Grant and another of 'Hector' punching a toff on the nose, the cover of the published music of *Sandy You're a Dandy* bears the inscription: 'Written, Composed and Sung by Hector Grant'.⁶¹ Among his documents⁶² a manuscript, *My Hee'lan' Fancy*, is signed as Grant. Though not dated it belongs to the same period, the brief interlude around 1906.

Denton Toms

The signature, *Denton Toms February 1939* appears on one of the manuscript copies of *The Chant of Bacchus*, a rollicking Wine-&-Kiss number, which was originally dated *London 1914* on another copy. In this copy Peter Dawson has inserted a high f' as effect note on the final dominant which leads into a descending coda-like cadence.

Peter Allison

This name only appears to have been used for one composition, *Tramping thro' the country side*; Words: Barker, published: Chappell, London, 1934.

Charles Webber or Charles Weber

Both names occur on copies of *Heart o' the Romany Rye*. The one signed *Charles Weber April 5th 1938* is a clean copy of another which has *Charles Webber* pasted over another name on the title page, then *Charles Webber* has been crossed out and *J. P. McCall* written in. On page 1 *Charles Weber* is pasted in as composer over *J. P. McCall* - for this name can be seen when the copy is held against the light. On page 11 Peter Dawson has signed *Charles Weber* but another *b* has been added so that it finally reads: *Charles Webber - April 5th 1938*. There is no obvious explanation. The number was sung in 1938 during the busy touring and compositional period prior to his return to Australia.

Gilbert Munday

There are two manuscripts of *Song of the Road* to the words of Len Mellor. One cannot be clearly identified as Peter Dawson's script but the second, in which the penultimate note and chord have been altered in pencil from melody d on a G⁷ leading to the c on an adventurous Fm⁺⁶, is signed: 'Gilbert Munday January 1939'.

Arnold Flint

Like several other pseudonyms the signature *Arnold Flint January 1939* on a clean copy of the setting of Hugo Bolton's *The Soul of a Ship*. On the older copy *Arnold Flint* has been pasted over another name; on the title page the name has been erased, but it is possible to see *J. P. McCall* on page 1 when held against the light.

⁶¹Burgis 1981, also Brisbane1991, 157

⁶²MS5030, muisc folio O

Evelyn Bird

This signature appears on a manuscript copy of *The Dreamer*, dated 1938, which was used in a concert at Newcastle-on-Tyne on 1 March 1939. It is one of several manuscripts of *The Dreamer*, the first, apparently the original under the name of J. P. McCall Norwood 1928. This old copy shows that Peter Dawson was an experienced writer by this time for it appears to have been written quickly. There is also evidence of use for the preparation of orchestral scores. The composer's name has been erased from the title page, but it occurs again on the inside, where it has been pasted over at some time. Peter Dawson obviously liked the number because there is another piano copy - of the McCall version - signed *Peter Dawson* 1949. He recorded (re-recorded?) it with the organist Herbert Dawson on 10 December 1948,⁶³ and sang it in the sixth programme of his final ABC series in January 1956 - assigned to J. P. McCall.

J. P. McCall

His most common nom-de-plume was effectively an *alter ego*. Though it was no secret that this was his 'composer' name, many listeners continued to think that McCall was another person, a friend of Peter Dawson; and as Peter Dawson used him on at least one occasion as an intermediary with the ABC, he may have made it a practice on other occasions too. As the examples have shown, he frequently used this name, which can be traced throughout his professional life:

1914 <i>Chant of Bacchus</i>	Molloy	PD ms	London
1923 <i>Heart of the Romany Rye</i>	Molloy,	PD ms,	(London)
1928 <i>Boots</i>	Kipling,	Chappell,	London
1933 <i>Westward Ho!</i>	Moore,	Swan,	London
1934 <i>Deep-Sea Mariner</i>	Barker,	Swan,	London
1937 <i>Old Kettledrum</i>	Barron,	Boosey,	London
1950 <i>Lasseter's Last Ride</i>	Harrington	PD ms,	(Sydney)

Peter Dawson

The use of so many pseudonyms may suggest that he kept his performance persona entirely separated from his compositional persona. This is not so: throughout his life he also wrote songs under his own name: *Australia*, *Blamey Boys*, *The Aussie Spirit*, *V for Victory*, *Whalin' Up the Lachlan* to name a few. These may possibly group together as songs with an Australian theme, or songs written in Australia, but there is no obvious explanation.

A chronological sampling of Peter Dawson's compositions will give an insight into the development of his compositional skills, the professional methodology that evolved and his musical aesthetic.

In Memorium [sic] of Daniel Dawson (1903)

It is interesting to compare the awkwardness of this early work with the facile script of his later years. The writing of the words still has a schoolboy carefulness, the evenly spaced music is primitively written with some

⁶³Burgis, 1981. *The Dreamer* was advertised on the back of *V for Victory* under 'Songs sung and composed by Peter Dawson'; published by Chappell in 1941 as McCall

incorrect rhythms: the general rhythm is 2_4 but on the last page, for example, one measure has three beats in the melody, the next $13/4$. Close to the finish there is a courageous but not very successful move from G major to G minor and back again, and an unsuccessful final cadence. Peter Dawson is still trusting his ear; at this point he has a lack of experience in writing musical notation; but nevertheless, has an interest which was to be developed successfully. The text, appropriate to mourning, finishes:

In faith and peace and prayer, Till He Whose home is ours Unite us there,
Sleep on dear heart and take thy peaceful sleep, God taketh those [text
missing] Sleep on dear heart and have thy gentle rest.

The text is set syllabically except at the cadence: 'thy' is scratched out in ink, so that 'have' and 'gen-' can be extended to two notes at the conclusion.

Primitive as the work may be it gives an insight into Peter Dawson's taste and vocal range at the time. The text is redolent of church jargon; to express a sincere emotion, he has chosen the only language and musical style with which he was familiar. The date of the composition suggests that it was inspired by the death of 'Daniel Dawson, Lieut. Highland Light Infantry', photographed in 1902,⁶⁴ presumably a Scottish cousin who had fought in the Boer War.

The musical range was G-e'. As the e' would have been too high for an untrained bass, it indicates that - no matter what skills he may have attributed to his teachers - his natural voice was a baritone with good low notes. This does not mean that he described himself as a baritone at that stage; he still placed emphasis on his rich low notes, for the effect note is reached by a gentle descent to the low, (bass) G, a technique used in popular Victorian bass songs, which appear in his early repertoire such as *Asleep in the Deep*, or *In Cellar Cool* (*Im tiefen Keller*).

Im tiefen Keller was written by Karl Ludwig Fischer, the bass for whom Mozart composed the role of Osmin,⁶⁵ a role with an extraordinary 'heavy bass' range, D-f'.⁶⁶ The song makes its effect by wide leaps from upper notes to resonant low notes - into the deep cellar and/or the effects of inebriation - and finishes by a tantalising *ad libitum* scale descending to the low F.⁶⁷ Very low notes were as much 'effect' notes as high ones. They could produce a serious, quieting effect, or, if the song was amusing, a chuckle leading to applause. That Peter Dawson was well aware of the impression made by these very low notes may be seen from his repertoire and also the

⁶⁴photograph, 1902, MS5030/8/134. a pencil note that this Daniel was his 'brother' is incorrect.

⁶⁵Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem serail*, 1782

⁶⁶William Mann, 1977, 293, [*The Operas of Mozart*, London, Cassell]: 'Karl Ludwig Fischer (1745-1825) was the greatest German bass of his day, pre-eminently popular with the Viennese public, having a vocal compass from bottom C to baritone high A and a florid technique that was unexcelled.' 'Fischer was the composer of the favourite *basso* party-piece, 'In cellar cool' which showed off the wide leaps characteristic of his Bolognese vocal schooling.'

⁶⁷In most English versions of the song the upper note is d'; in a German collection [Scheidemantel, *Meisterweisen* for Bass, Eulenburg, Leipzig, 1913] the top note is f', showing off two extremes of a trained bass voice, which makes more sense. The adjustment to d' would make the song more accessible to the average bass voice.

example of a personal manuscript, words and melody only, titled *The Miner*. Generally it has a very low tessitura but also some very high notes for a bass. It finishes on a low F pianissimo. As it is very low compared with most other songs in his repertoire it suggests that this is a very early manuscript influenced by 'In cellar cool'.⁶⁸

Chant of Bacchus or Festal Song (1914)

He continued composing regularly and doctoring music to suit his purpose. On the orchestral parts of the 'Denton Toms' manuscript of the rollicking *Chant of Bacchus* - 'When radiant nymphs around thee cluster' - Peter Dawson has written in front of verse 1 *composed by Peter Dawson London 1914* and has signed the end of the 1st Violins; *Peter Dawson London 1914*, indicating an earlier recording than the recording of May, 1930,⁶⁹ which shows the composer as J. P. McCall.

Heart o the Romany Rye (1923)

From Peter Dawson's manuscripts it could be assumed that this number dates from 1923⁷⁰ but the original, published as J. P. McCall, would have been c.1919, when the composer received three verses with refrain, *Heart o' the Romany Rye* (*The Song of the Gypsy*), 'written expressly for Peter Dawson Esq', from J. Crofton Molloy. Two verses and a refrain were sent on 7 August 1919; on 7 September the original two verses plus a third, which Peter Dawson edited further, presumably in preparation for publishing.⁷¹

Cigarette (1923)

This musical hall style number merely gives an insight into Peter Dawson's sense of humour. In an era when men smoked everywhere this light-hearted Peter Dawson manuscript praises the pleasure of smoking. In G, ³/₄, tempo di valse, with a very limited range, D-e'; it is signed *Dec 29 1923*. At the conclusion, after the cadential pause on a bland dominant in the second last measure, Peter Dawson has written *Place for "Business" smoke on stage* before proceeding to the tonic resolution.⁷²

Boots (1928)

Because *Boots* became the most popular number he ever composed, it could be seen as his signature tune.⁷³ As he trotted it out on most occasions it

⁶⁸ It could well belong to the recording EMI, 1907, 10.00, *Christmas Eve in an Australian Miners' Camp*. Peter Dawson has used it as scrap manuscript; he has written the words & melody only of Tchaikowsky's *To the Forest* on back of *The Miner*. Markings indicate that it belongs to an orchestra *To the Forest* was orchestrated. One EMI recording was made in 1922, but one may have been recorded earlier also.

⁶⁹Burgis, 1981

⁷⁰ The manuscript copies signed Charles Webber or Weber in 1938 were for the tours in that period, c/f programme, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1939, 03.01, *Heart o' the Romany Rye*, Charles Weber

⁷¹Molloy, 1919, 08.07: MS5030/3/62a, 2 verses & refrain; MS5030/3/62b (1919, 09.07) 3 verses

⁷²2 copies, music folios B, O.

⁷³x-ref to BBCTV, 1947, 09.04, *Boots*, McCall, play-in 25" - to introduce Peter Dawson. one Peter Dawson mss copy of *Boots* is: *entrance & Bowing Music for Boots, To be repeated at Conductors discretion* (written on the back of a page of *The Strong Go On* (Thayer) which he

could be seen not only as the taste and expectation of his listening public and his concert audience but also as the expression of his own musical horizon.

While Fred Weatherley may have been the poet laureate of the drawing room ballad, Rudyard Kipling⁷⁴ was the unsurpassed voice of the British Raj. Many songs to Kipling texts appear in his repertoire: *Danny Deeever*, *Kangaroo and Dingo*, *Rolling Down to Rio*, *A Smuggler's Song*, several settings of *Mandalay*.⁷⁵ and his among his own compositions: *Cells*, *Route Marchin'* and a manuscript idea, *The Ladies*.⁷⁶

During most of Peter Dawson's life words such as 'the King', 'patriotism' 'empire', 'commonwealth', 'dominion', were evocative, were emotive. Every citizen of the Commonwealth was a British subject, had free access to Britain and fellow commonwealth countries: loyalty to the Crown was unqualified. No formal occasion began without the singing or playing of *God Save the King*, the entire audience stood, the men bared their heads. It is no exaggeration to say that it stirred the hearts of most. School children saluted the flag first thing on Monday mornings; they may have sung a hymn, they may have sung *Advance Australia Fair*, they certainly sang the *National Anthem*. Although latent ideas of independence and republicanism had been fuelled by the Second World War,⁷⁷ most Australians still talked about 'going home' when they were visiting England even into the late 'fifties. Most educated Australians knew as much about English history, literature and theatre, about major buildings in London, as they did about Australia. So it is not surprising that so many songs of the pre-war period, the period dominated by Peter Dawson, dealt with this love of the mother country and loyalty to the monarch and royal family.

Boots stirred the heart. When *Boots* was sung listeners did not associate the song with the Boer War, but identified with the common soldier as symbolic of their own place within the mighty British Imperialistic system. Peter Dawson claims that he had his fracas with Sir Henry Wood for singing *Boots* as an encore 'at the last concert before the B.B.C. took over the Proms' that is the last concert in 1926.⁷⁸ Peter Dawson claims that Chappell's approached him after the concert, but publication was delayed awaiting permission to use the words from Kipling's agent, although apparently Kipling had said:

sang on BBC, 1936, 09.09)

⁷⁴Rudyard Kipling, Bombay 1865 - London 1936, received the Nobel prize for literature 1907

⁷⁵*Danny Deeever*: Walter Damrosch; *Kangaroo & Dingo*, *Rollin down to Rio*: Edward German op cit; *A Smuggler's Song*, Mortimer, *Mandalay*: Speaks, Willebey, Hedgecock, Cobb to be discussed.

⁷⁶*Cells*, 1930; *Route Marchin'*, 1930; *The Ladies*, Peter Dawson mss, n.d.

⁷⁷Dawson, 1961, 03.10: comments on Tierney correspondence: Attacks on royalty - Margaret & her husband - the Aussie Press is the worlds worst, sons of blasted convicts & champion American boot-lickers.

⁷⁸Dawson, 1951, 68. Blaikley, D., 'Ballad concerts' in *New Grove*: The new Queen's Hall was leased by the firm, which ran the Promenade Concerts there from 1915 until 1926 when the BBC took over their management.'

"Yes, Mr Dawson, sing the song with my best wishes for a success" ... and had been kind enough to add, "There is no one I should like to hear sing one of my verses more than you, Mr. Dawson."⁷⁹

Boots was published in 1928⁸⁰ and the Gramophone Company recorded an orchestral version, which was reviewed in July 1929.⁸¹ The original recording score - marked *The Gramophone Company Limited, "International Artistes Department", Hayes* - and several sketches are among Peter Dawson's papers. Extrapolating from this composition and many others, the standard 'orchestra' was four Violin 1, three Violin 2, Viola, Cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, cornet (later trumpet), trombone, tuba and tympani. There could be some variation in the numbers of each instrument, but by and large an orchestra about twenty strong was crammed into the studio. The conductor had to make do with a piano score with indications of instrumentation, as in this case.

Because of its immense popularity *Boots* has an honoured place among Peter Dawson's stories of various compositions. He claimed that, on a tour to Margate, the regular rhythm of clicking train wheels reminded him of the regular stamping of soldiers marching boots. The expected plod, plod, plod is introduced by a curious three measures of galloping triplets, organised to syncopate in measures two and three by placing the rhythmic accent on the second beat. Nan thought it 'too agitated' when she first heard it: it does not suggest an introductory roll of drums; perhaps the officer in charge of the weary infantrymen was on horse-back.

Peter Dawson has certainly caught the heavy, repetitious, monotonous fall of heavy boots very well. No-one who has worn army boots could fail to identify with those soldiers 'foot-foot-foot-foot-sloggin' over Africa'; the only thing they were aware of were 'boot-boots-boots-boots movin' up an' down again' - so pointless, imprisoned in a wall of motion from which there was no escape, for 'there's no discharge in the war!'

From the distance of nearly thirty years, with another catastrophic war between, the song woke a nostalgia for the old comradeship, the sharing of exactly the same tedious mesmerising pointlessness. 'Try-try-try-try to think o' something different - Oh my Gawd keep me from goin' lunatic'. Not the heat of battle, but the common monotony of the common soldier, symbolised by those essential, reliable boots, formed an indestructible bond between them.

The idea of setting the Kipling poem appears to have been in his mind for some time. On a manuscript titled *Belts*, Peter Dawson has started four sketches of the same idea, which became *Boots*:

- 1) pencilled melody, occasional accompaniment measures, words in ink, *pp* marked 2 then 1 (refrain page 1); page 2: four flats 1st staves only, crossed-out to two flats but refrain in one flat⁸²

⁷⁹Dawson, 1951, 153-156

⁸⁰MS5030, music folio B, *Boots*, McCall, J. P., 1928, Chappell, London. Dawson writes 'duly published by Swan ...'. Subsequent composition *Cells, Route Marchin'* were published by Swan, so assume Swan a subsidiary of Chappell.

⁸¹Walsh, 1962

⁸²ultimately in one flat, but d minor not F

- 2) two blank pages, one pencil measure indecipherable
- 3) *Boots. Kipling McCall* in F, range A-c', ⁶8, music up to *Chorus*, words in ink, music in pencil different melody to 1 above;
- 4) beginning of the plan for verse 2; back page is crossed-through

The substantive composition, in d minor not F, with the constricted range, c-d', has its source in another manuscript written in Peter Dawson's small, very neat handwriting. Again there are various possibilities of the setting of the text, including the ending and a short-hand 30 2 *the day before, 9 & 20 mile today* - the syllabic setting of the printed 'thirty-two the day be-fore' and 'nine and twenty mile to-day'.

The song has no refrain. Each of the two verses (two grouping of two) has the same construction: two equivalent divisions, effectively A and B. Even though it is short, the phrase, 'no discharge in the war', could be regarded as a refrain because it ends each verse and is always presented as the same musical phrase: c', a, g, e, leading to the tonic, d, which seems awkward. This ending works well enough for the end of the first division, because the abrupt phrase suggests that the song should continue, yet, surprisingly, there is no effect ending at the conclusion of the second grouping. It cries out for a codetta. Perhaps Peter Dawson sensed that some effect was necessary for he has corrected the original by simply inverting the last note suddenly: instead of singing the lower e, d he jumps to c[#], d' - not even a brief postlude.

Considering its success this opinion may sound carping, but Nan's first reaction included: "It's - well, it sounds a little ordinary". And it does. But Peter Dawson's enunciation, his sincerity, his magnetism and his knowledge of the audience which wanted to hear him, purified any musical sin, which another might impute.

Westward Ho! or The Pirate goes West (1933)⁸³ appeared regularly in programmes from its premiere⁸⁴ until his closing ABC broadcasts. The documents held indicate the preparation for orchestration: there is a set of parts and a piano score pasted up for Conductor', presumably first used for the recording in December 1933.⁸⁵

As the title suggests, it is a sea-faring song, of the type with which Peter Dawson's name is associated; a 'Give me sails, and masts and spars, buccaneers and pirates bold' reminiscence. It is musically far more complex than *Boots*. In B^b, common time, 'briskly', in the comfortable range, B^b-E^b, with an ossia low G and a high f' - a clear indicator of his vocal capabilities at the time. While the refrain follows the same pattern, the verses have slight musical variations, which add to the interest. A slightly syncopated standard four-measure 'drawing room' phrase based on the refrain, 'Sing a

⁸³*Westward Ho! or The Pirate Goes West*, m: J. P. McCall, w: Lockwood Moore, Swan, London 1933, MS5030, Music folio N. Peter Dawson used either of the titles in his programmes.

⁸⁴BBC, 1933, 01.29 op. cit

⁸⁵Burgis, 1981, HMV B8089

song of Westward Ho!⁸⁶ serves as an introduction. In the first verse a sound marching rhythm for the singer is set against a floating minim division of the piano right hand over a wave-like syncopation in the left created by tying the second and third crotchet. A triplet rhythm melisma on 'roll' (-ing)⁸⁷ over harp-like rising and falling arpeggios leads to a long vocally demanding e^b with pause, before calm minims finish the verse quietly. The refrain begins with a rollicking four measures, but again harp-like arpeggios underpin 'slowly, gently slow'. On this 'slow' the principal note is g, but the singer may choose the lower octave for effect.

At the end of the last verse Peter Dawson has changed the phrase leading to the refrain, 'live and laugh and plunder', to b^b, d', b^b, d', b^b, c', c' for a dotted minim. To make it more interesting and more effective he used the alternative b^b, f' with a pause, d' b^b, g, c', c'; and to conclude he has also developed the concluding measures, replacing the earlier measure on g, with four measures on d' over a recapitulation of the theme from the introduction, thus making a musical whole with considerable variety, still in his ballad style but nearer to a good English art song in Stanford style.

Old Kettledrum, Fret-foot, The 'Prentice Lads o' Cheap.⁸⁸ (1938)

Although the texts deal with different subjects, these three are grouped together because they stem from the same period and the same author.⁸⁹ They are good songs, typical of Peter Dawson's work: a good story and a good tune. The sentiment is not set too high, is not 'poetic'; just straight-forward language - like a good yarn. Because the songs were tailor-made for himself, their ranges are similar:

<i>Old Kettledrum</i>	C major	G-e'	4_4 ,	tempo di marcia
<i>Fret-Foot</i>	A minor	A-f'	4_4 ,	marziale
<i>'Prentice Lads o' Cheap</i>	Bb,	B ^b -f'	2_4 ,	allegretto

The three numbers remained among Peter Dawson's favourites. They stem from the productive period, 1938-39, the period of extended concert touring of England. These compositions cover the areas one associates with Peter Dawson: a military song - *Old Kettledrum*, a sea-faring song - *Fret-foot*, and a light-hearted peasant-to-peer song - *The 'Prentice Lads* - and no sooner composed than recorded.⁹⁰

The techniques of alteration and correction for orchestration follow the pattern already noted. The four-square rhythms, introduced by a wisp of melody, tell the different stories in straight-forward syllabic settings, each melody catching the character of the text.

86 

87 influenced by *Rolling down to Rio?*

88 *Old Kettle Drum*, Boosey, London, 1937; *Fret-foot*, Prowse, London, 1937; *The 'Prentice Lads o' Cheap*, Ascherberg, London, 1938.

89 Barron, 1938: The author, J. Francis Barron, also offered a further text, *Chasseur Bleu*, which Peter Dawson may have intended to set, because correspondence about a first variant of the text suggests that there was an earlier version.

90 Burgis, 1981: *Prentice Lads*, January 1938; Walsh, 1962: *Fret-foot* reviewed September 1937.

Old Kettledrum

A note from J. F. B (*Late 'Queens' Bays'*) heads the inner title page of :

A small and inadequate tribute to that fast disappearing body of 'four-legged veterans,' and to one companionable old troop-horse in particular!

for 'Old Kettledrum' was a regimental war-horse, a gun-carriage horse. Though the nostalgic singer wonders what has happened to his old four-footed friend, the horse also personifies mateship. Growing old, out of the service, he hopes his old comrade will find the peace and comfort he deserves.

Fret-foot

There is enough variation to the setting of the five verses to maintain interest while the longish story is told. There are some musical similarities to *Westward Ho!* with a decorated triplet on the second beat of the basic melody giving a wave-like lilt, but on the whole it is much more direct. The singer, watching ships at Stepney, longs for the sea, imagines palm-lined shores and 'brown shapen shoulders of maidens of Mombasa'. A touch of *Road to Mandalay* sentiment, and a nice line for the composer: *The 'Peter' at the fore with the square of blue a-showing*. A lively number, in which he could change vocal character several times.

The 'Prentice Lads o' Cheap

He could change vocal character even more in the *Prentice Lads*, for the apprentice from Cheapside could expect to work his way to the top of the social ladder as much by his native wit as hard work. Among Peter Dawson's documents is a page from a magazine, in which the words were published with drawings of the lad at various stages of his career.⁹¹ Lively continuous quavers allow the singer to use a melodious patter. It is easy to imagine Peter Dawson - or Uncle Charlie beside the aspidistra - adopting various poses and vocal qualities as the lively mercer's apprentice dances, marries, grows 'middle-aged and staid'

Then a shiny pate and a portly gait
With a shrew of a wife to keep, sirs!
And the Wig and the Chair of a plump Lord Mayor,
For your 'prentice lad o' Cheap, sirs!
For your 'prentice lad o' [top f'] Cheap, sirs!

These compositions might be seen as the end of the English period. Caught in Australia by World War 2, the compositions from 1939 onwards move through jingoistic numbers to concentrate principally on Australian themes. He had developed an accomplished writing technique; the only limits were those imposed by his taste. There were no adventures into strange keys or strange rhythms. He clearly liked those solid ballads, liked those solid harmonies which were easily accepted by his listeners. The compositions should not be under-rated: they have their own intrinsic quality; they are better than other latter-day songs, which he made popular, like *Old Father Thames*, *The Road to Gundagai* or *Waltzing Matilda*. He

⁹¹MS030, page from an unnamed magazine. Barron's text. Assumed 1938, time of publication, but n.d.

continued to produce works of equivalent quality in Australia and confidently believed he could turn his hand to any type of composition, as the need arose.

And that need arose when his voice was need to rally his country in wartime. Because of his fame and because of his conviction, Peter Dawson became the mouthpiece of the most jingoistic sentiments. He would sing any patriotic song with naive enthusiasm and also felt compelled to write his own nationalistic compositions. There is a line between patriotism and jingoism: Kipling made his warriors realistic patriots, who put up with miserable conditions because they were conscripted; Peter Dawson - like most of his countrymen - never thought of the real consequences of war; they could brook no criticism of loyalty to the Crown; patriotism was an absolute.

These sentiments were apparent in the review of his recorded repertoire and many examples by a variety of composers may be found in his own sheet music: *England All the Way, The Cry of the Fighting Forces, Tommy Lad, The Drum Major, The Trumpeter, V the Sign of Liberty, Soldiers of the Queen*.⁹² His own compositions, some published, some only ideas in manuscript form, mirror the same conviction: *Australia, The Blamey Boys, The Flag that will never be furled, God Bless Australia Fair, Dreaming of England, The Spirit of Britain, The Spirit of England, Sons of the Southern Cross, Wake up Australia, and V for Victory, .*

Song of Australia (1940)

Such is the confusion over the authenticity of some Peter Dawson material that when discussing this song in 1996 Peter Burgis wrote 'it appears we

⁹²MS5030

title	music	words
<i>Blue Dragoons, The</i>	Russell. Kennedy	Weatherley, F. E
<i>Brothers of the Empire</i>	Thayer, Pat	Hellmore, W.
<i>Call of the Pipes, The</i>	Murray, Alan	Mortimer, C. G.
<i>Changing of the Guard, The</i>	Flotsam & Jetsam	Flotsam & Jetsam
<i>Cry of the Fighting Forces, The</i>	Keats, Horace	Beck, Catherine
<i>Drum Major, The</i>	Newton, Ernest	Weatherley, F.E.
<i>England All the Way</i>	Longstaffe, Ernest	Lochton, Edward
<i>God Save the Queen</i>	Carey, Henry	Carey, Henry
<i>If ever I Meet the Sergeant</i>	Sterndale Bennett	Wright, H. E.
<i>Old England</i>	Meehan, P.V.	Meehan, P.V
<i>Sergeant of the Line, A</i>	Squire, W.H.	Weatherley, F.E.
<i>Soldiers of the Queen, The</i>	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie
<i>Strong Go On, The</i>	Thayer, Pat	Siever, Bruce
<i>To Greet the Queen</i>	Ball, Nancy	Ball, Nancy
<i>Tommy Lad!</i>	Margetson, E. J.	Teschemacher, E
<i>Trumpeter, The</i>	Dix, J. Airlie	Barron, J. F.
<i>V the Sign of Liberty</i>	Smallwood, H.	Smallwood, H.
<i>Veteran's Song, The</i>	Adams, Stephan	Weatherly, F. E.

National Library display, 1996: two wartime songs *Bravo, Sons of the Sea, Bravo, Sons of the Air* carry photos of Peter Dawson, indicating that he sang them.

have another Dawson song and pseudonym'.⁹³ This famous nationalistic song was recorded by Peter Dawson in 1940; it was not the Carl Linger *Song of Australia* from the last century, which he had recorded in 1932 but a new, popular version, which would even be sung by children when they saluted the flag in the school-yard on Monday mornings. Anecdotal evidence credits it to a South Australian woman, but on the recording⁹⁴ the composer is noted as Jackson based on an article in *Music Maker*:⁹⁵ 'written and composed by an Australian under the nom-de-plume of "Phillip Jackson," a combination of Port Phillip and Port Jackson'. Among Peter Dawson's sheet music⁹⁶ it appears on *Australian Army Amenities Service* manuscript paper: 'words and music by Kurrajong', and is signed S. Burleigh. On another copy words and music are by M. Kennedy. A third manuscript in Peter Dawson's handwriting⁹⁷ consists of three verses and the accompaniment but the voice notes only pencilled in - presumably his copy of the arrangement for the recording.

Australia (1940)

A note from the 1982 National Library Exhibition in the manuscripts reads: *Dawson arrangement of another potential National Anthem*. His own 'new anthem' was premiered with the New South Wales Police Choir⁹⁸ in February, 1940: ' "it is a stirring thing in slow time, and it took me two hours to compose," he said.'⁹⁹ Loyal as *Australia* may be, it is a bit of a confidence trick.

Although the completed composition, composed by Peter Dawson to words by Harry Baxter, went through several stages of development, it should not have taken him too long to compose because it is simply Maurice Besley's *England*, which Peter Dawson had performed¹⁰⁰ after Leslie Boosey had presented it to him when he returned from the 1933 tour.¹⁰¹ In his original draft Peter Dawson has written out verse 1, refrain, verse 2 on one page, on another some minor amendments to the words to make them appropriate to Australia, and acknowledged the source: *Music by Maurice Besley, arranged J. P. McCall*. As the final words are attributed to Harry Baxter, it could be assumed that Peter Dawson's alterations has written out stem from him.

This particular manuscript is well worn. It is timed at two minutes, has the form ABA, with the B section in D minor. The final two measures are pasted over to shorten the postlude, and Peter Dawson has noted Harry Baxter's name and his own address.¹⁰² *England* was in ³/₄, F major, range c-

⁹³Burgis, 1996, 10.13 to author

⁹⁴Burgis, 1981: recorded Homebush, 1940, 07.11

⁹⁵ *Music Maker*, 1940. 08.31 (included with Burgis' letter 1996, 10.13)

⁹⁶MS5030, music folio O

⁹⁷MS5030, music folio K

⁹⁸newspaper photographs 1940, 02.24 and Neate, 1984, 06.14, In one photo Peter Dawson has pencilled in hair falling forward + moustache as send-up of Hitler.

⁹⁹Brisbane, (ed) 1991, 251.

¹⁰⁰BBC, 1934, 01.06 and advertisement South African tour, 1935, 05.11.

¹⁰¹Boosey, L., 1933, 11.02

¹⁰²hw: Harry Baxter (Sydney) Peter Dawson 42a Dalhousie St. Haberfield. Peter Dawson has also noted in blue: 1 *Wake Up Aust* , 2 *On to Glory Boys* , in ink: *Once a jolly Swagman*

e'. Peter Dawson's first draft was in F major, range d-d'.

Another copy, a full manuscript orchestral score, by *George S. English* would have been the orchestration for Peter Dawson and the choir. A third copy, with the new words added by Peter Dawson, is the final transposition for publishing: down one tone to E^b, b^b-d' - a very comfortable range for any average voice.¹⁰³

Sons of the Southern Cross was another rousing nationalistic freedom song. The manuscript carries the address of the author, E. Heath: "Lymington" *Innic View Comboyne Via Wingham Q.*, and at the end it is signed: *Peter Dawson 20th October 1940 4 Halcyon Flats Darling Point, Sydney*.

V for Victory

As propaganda, what better title than the V for Victory sign, made famous by Winston Churchill. In 1941 Chappell published 'V for Victory Words and Music by Peter Dawson'.¹⁰⁴ On the garish cover a wreath encircling A.C.F. is superimposed over a large V, and carries the advice that the song has been:

Adopted for the "V for Victory" Drive. sponsored by The Right Hon. The Lord Mayor of Sydney (Alderman Stanley S. Crick). Full proceeds given to the Australian Comforts Fund

Peter Dawson also recorded the number on 14 August, 1941;¹⁰⁵ the simple key of F major, the marching 2_4 , the range c-e' are indicators of Peter Dawson's musical intuition and his comfortable range. It was meant to be sung by anyone; as he recalls:¹⁰⁶

This song was sung all over Australia - in the theatres, music-halls, picture houses, concerts, schools - and played by all military bands.

The Spirit of Britain and *The Spirit of England* (1942) are the same song with some words altered. The dates are uncertain as only manuscripts are available.¹⁰⁷ They are in the same key, A minor, range d-f', 4_4 , only the *maestoso* has been changed to 'with rhythmic pomp & dignity'. *The Spirit of England* was probably published, certainly performed. An orchestration for military concert band and a recording from the War Loan Rally in New Zealand, circa July 1942,¹⁰⁸ indicates that it is wartime literature.

The Aussie Spirit (1943)

Because there is later correspondence resurrecting this composition, there

camp'd which suggests that these songs were also sung with *Australia* on some occasion.

¹⁰³a more comfortable key for himself at that stage of his career.

¹⁰⁴MS50503, music folio L

¹⁰⁵Burgis, 1981: *V for Victory*, 1941, 08.14, RZ G24398, Jim Gussey dance orchestra

¹⁰⁶Dawson, 1951, 162

¹⁰⁷music folio K

¹⁰⁸Burgis, 1981: NZBC, Auckland, with Henry Penn at the piano. The celebrated Australian accompanist pronounced his name with a French accent. In his inimitable way Peter Dawson pronounced it 'Pong'.

could be some confusion about the publishing date, but in 1943 Chappell (Sydney) published *The "Aussie" Spirit* to words by Leslie J. Davies.¹⁰⁹ There were two drafts by J. P. McCall:¹¹⁰ the original draft, as *The Aussian*, in A^b, with the range b^b-d^b;¹¹¹ the second draft, as *The Aussie Spirit*, was a re-working of *The Aussian* melody in the final C major, range c-d'.¹¹² In 1957 Peter Dawson must have been working on other words, which Leslie Davies had sent,¹¹³ when Davies suggested that *The Aussie Spirit* be used for the coming Australia Day. Peter Dawson contacted the publisher, who suggested he amend the accompaniment and use it on the ABC's Village Glee Club, possibly as a theme song.¹¹⁴

My Mine of Memories was one of the manuscripts referred to by Leslie Davies in 1957. Although Lashmar wrote that 'My Mine of Memories, words by L. J. Davis, music by J. P. McCall & J. Kimlin' was 'too difficult to develop successfully',¹¹⁵ a score dated Sydney, April 1957, by the associate composer, J. M. Kimlin, was developed further and signed by Peter Dawson Sydney Australia 1958.¹¹⁶ The final version appears to be the manuscript signed J. P. McCall & James Kimlin¹¹⁷ which the seventy-six year old Peter Dawson broadcast in April 1958.¹¹⁸

Peter Dawson received many poems and words: the verses of *Australia* had been typed out on the back of comic verses by Oscar Walter titled *Apples*;¹¹⁹ on 2 August 1940 a Donald Mackintosh of Essendon offered words and a tune; on 7 December 1949 a D.A. (Alan) Ford of Kamo, Northland, New Zealand wrote giving Peter Dawson full rights to the words and music of his song *Give Me Freedom*, and on 2 May 1958 the '83 year-old', E. E. Graig from North Adelaide offers his words for a new National Anthem.

¹⁰⁹music folio A

¹¹⁰music folio F

¹¹¹melody blocked out in ink, piano accompaniment not composed; words altered, melody altered in pencil; key signature on first stave of each of 3 pages only

¹¹²*The Aussie Spirit* is written out on the back of Loewe's *The Clock*, a piece Peter Dawson had often sung. He appears to have sung with or about the time of the new piece, for it is dated 6 November 1943. It gives another clue to Peter Dawson's excellent musicianship for he has proudly noted - a very flash P in the signature - *The copy mislaid, this one written out from memory Sydney 6.11.43 Peter Dawson.*

¹¹³Davies, 1957, 11.04: 'what have you done about the two songs I left you'

¹¹⁴Lashmar, E., of Chappell, Sydney, 1958, 01.31. Showing his customary interest in the rewards for his labours Peter Dawson received the reply that royalties for *The Aussie Spirit*: 2/3 of 10% to Peter Dawson, 1/3 of 10% to Leslie Davis, other fees 50/50. (Lashmar, 1958, 02.18)

¹¹⁵Lashmar, 1957, 12.18; also ABC/AA, 1957, 11, 25, *Pictorial Show*: Large Photo Peter Dawson composing with his left hand- 'busy in Newport home writing a new ballad' *My Mine of Memories*

¹¹⁶melody different at mm23; accompaniment missing mm22-25; cut mm in first version not in this version ; chorus mm 1-32 the same as first version; pencil beginning 2nd time bar now in ink but altered down a tone, i.e. stays in E^b whereas in the first version was changed to F

¹¹⁷Peter Dawson writing; final second time bar in F; 2 verses, first in black, second in red (often written this way); pencil inked over; 12 mm then 2mm cut, numbered in red biro, 25 to chorus numbered 32 chorus to end 1st time bar; nine 2nd time mm not numbered; title again p4.

¹¹⁸Burgis, 1981: *My Mine of Memories*, 1958, 04.30, ABC radio, accompanist Ronda Gehling

¹¹⁹MS5030/3/66b

One of the most interesting offers which Peter Dawson retained was from Dame Mary Gilmour on 29 June, 1940.¹²⁰ She too shared Peter Dawson's patriotic sincerity and wanted to use her name to aid the War Effort. She sent him four typed verses of her nationalistic *No Foe Shall Gather Our Harvest*,¹²¹ together with the same poem, surrounded by a collage of photos showing horses and their riders, a bullock wagon, sheep, ANZACs landing, which had been printed in *The Australian Women's Weekly*. The sub-caption read:¹²²

At 75, Australian poet and writer Mary Gilmour, Dame of the British Empire, has written one of her finest Australian songs of the war. It appears above. "I'm too old to do many things I would like to do to win the war," she said, "but I can still write. Here is a song for men and women of Australia." The inspiring note in the song is so vividly Australian that *The Australian Women's Weekly* is proud to present it to readers.

Shades of Cobb & Co. (1940)

In his memoirs Peter Dawson his appreciation of contributions from admirers was expressed in his admiration for 'a charming lady, Mrs. P. Carroll, whom he never met, but had sent him the lyrics as *Grey Shades of Cobb & Co.* which satisfied is aesthetic objective:¹²³

When I started to set the lines to music the words formed themselves into fantastic chordings and melody, underlying the soul of the country.

The manuscript of this Australian Bush Ballad, signed *Sydney 1940 J P McCall*, begins in A minor but finishes in A major. It begins in 6_8 , allegro - but changes to 3_4 , Tempo di Valse. The constricted range is c \sharp -d' with an effect low A to end the piece.

Cobb & Co is one of a series of compositions from this period. *The enduring Peter Dawson*¹²⁴ refers to 'a number of distinctly Australian numbers: *The Bushrangers*, *Lassiter's Last Ride*, *Shades of Cobb & Co*, *Whalin' Down the Lachlan*, *Blamey Boys*'. At the end of the *Cobb & Co.* manuscript are twelve measures of *Lassiter's Last Ride*, which also shares an honoured place in his memoirs with *Whalin' up the Lachlan* and *The Bushrangers*, all of which he recorded and sang in various programmes.

Lassiter's Last Ride and The Bushrangers (1940)

According to his widow, Mrs Constance Dawson: "He often recorded Australian songs in preference to the better-known material. Peter loved the old bush songs, especially those of Jack O'Hagan¹²⁵ and Edward Harrington."¹²⁶

¹²⁰MS5030/3/71a

¹²¹author note: have not found evidence that Peter Dawson set these words but consider it probable, as she has written on Verse 3: 'could be chorus'.

¹²²Gilmour, 1940.06.29 in *Womeens Weekly* Vol 8, No 4, p.5, [MS5030/3/71b]

¹²³Dawson, 1951, 161

¹²⁴Australian newspaper, 1991, 08.23

¹²⁵*Along the Road to Gundagai* - a more ephemeral piece associated with Peter Dawson.

¹²⁶newspaper, 1982, 03.30 [*The Bulletin*] *A tribute to Peter Dawson*

In 1941 Peter Dawson offered Allan's another composition, *East of Suez*, a setting of the words by Harold Bowden.¹²⁷ With the reply some months later¹²⁸ Allan's sent a manuscript with suggested alterations to his melody and alternative lyrics by Edward Harrington, which Peter Dawson approved, because he had already learned to value the poet's work for *The Bushrangers* and *Lassiter's Last Ride*, to verses by Edward Harrington, had been published by Allan & Co. in 1940. *The Bulletin* commented:¹²⁹

The tunes are original and phrased to the words, and there are dramatic qualities in both ditties. Any baritone could sing them and any pianist of any pretensions could play the accompaniments.

These two songs, to verses by Edward Harrington, appeared with the to-be-popular, *Whalin' up the Lachlan* (Louis Esson), described as: **'Three songs with life, A budget from Allan's.** Here is typical Australian verse, music with a sturdy sweep to it.'¹³⁰ Edward Harrington was a respected poet, in Banjo Paterson or Henry Lawson style, that is, he could express the feeling for this land of extremes through historical reflection. The 'virile, swinging quality' ascribed to his poems could be as aptly applied to Peter Dawson's compositional style.

*Lassiter's Last Ride*¹³¹ is in A minor, range B-e', in a slightly pretentious ⁹8 - as a riding rhythm. There are three manuscripts of *Lassiter's Last Ride*: one with manuscript alterations pasted in page 1 and 2 and signed J. P. McCall, appears to be the original version prior to publication; a second manuscript appears to be a copy of the published version with some variations in the rhythm and a 9th, f', added later as option to penultimate high e' on the dominant. A third manuscript, the same as the second, has the title from printed music pasted on front, a note: *published by Allan & Co Melbourne*, and the signature: J. P. McCall 14th July 1950. As the song was published in 1940, the latter two manuscripts suggest that the song was reprinted.¹³²

The Bushrangers

The idea of the bushranger as folk hero had already appealed to Peter Dawson, because a fragmentary manuscript on the theme is dated J. P. M. 11.7.30 exists. The published version is in F minor, marked 'sturdily', in the rarer ³4 rhythm¹³³, with the simple range c-e^b. Three notes from the end the dominant cadence point is held over a C major chord resolving to

¹²⁷Peter Dawson mss, 3 pp drafted words, melody, accomp; headed (Peter Dawson hw) (lh)Harold Bowden, (centre) "East of Suez", (rh) Peter Dawson 11.10.41

¹²⁸Allan and Co, 1942, 03.12, to Peter Dawson c/- Messrs T. Dawson & Sons Pty. Ltd., 21-37 Booth Street, Camperdown. NSW, [his brother's canister factory]

¹²⁹Brisbane, K., (ed), 1991, 251

¹³⁰AMN, 1940, 08.00, 18

¹³¹spelt Lassiter in his memoirs.

¹³²Allan's published *Songs of the Peter Dawson Era*, n.d., which carries a photo of Peter Dawson from about this time. *Whalin' up the Lachlan* is included, but not *Lassiter's Last Ride*, so these manuscripts were not for that collection.

¹³³also B section of *Cobb & Co.* so must have been flirting with ³4 as a change from the platitudinous ⁴4 or ²4.

A^b over F minor, C⁷, F minor. On his personal copy Peter Dawson has pasted a newspaper picture of Ned Kelly with a pencil note: 'Ned Kelly, Joe Byrne, Dan Kelly and Steve Hart descended on the bank at Jerilderie NSW, capturing the police, borrowing their uniforms, holding up the bank.'

As *Clancy of the Overflow* and *Mandalay Scena* were Peter Dawson's last recordings for EMI they indicate that the abilities of the singer at this late stage of his career had hardly diminished. Though *Clancy of the Overflow* (1948) was not one of Peter Dawson's own compositions, the Canberra-based composer, Albert Arlen, had the same empathy with Banjo Paterson's famous text as Dawson had had with Harrington's. Arlen, who was also promoted by Chappell's, had good reason to be an admirer of Peter Dawson:¹³⁴

Dear Peter,

I wonder if you remember asking me to send you another song at the APRA meeting? It's called "Blue Peter" & I've sent the MSS on to Ernest Lashmar, because I want him to see it, before it is sent on to you, as I've dedicated the song to him.

It's a wonderful word picture of the activity on Sydney Harbour and I hope it will find a place in your large repertoire. You have already recorded "The Rivetter", "Bring Back To Simple Faith" and "Clancy" for me, & I trust you will like this.

Peter Dawson held two copies of *Clancy*: the published version¹³⁵ and an edited version.¹³⁶ The first is in G, range B-f[#], but Peter Dawson has noted 'down one tone' on the second copy, that is, into F major, range A-e', for more personal vocal comfort. Although the overall rhythm is designated $\frac{4}{4}$ it varies throughout, with some quasi recitative sections. It bears a close resemblance to Peter Dawson's ballad genre, but is musically more adventurous - an opinion not shared in *A tribute to Peter Dawson*:¹³⁷

One of Dawson's best-known songs is his rendition of *Clancy of the Overflow* ... It is over-dramatic by today's standards, but is an excellent example of the stirring bass-baritone voice that captured the imagination of thousands of record buyers throughout the world.

Mandalay Scena was the apotheosis. Those who think that *On the Road to Mandalay* is the ultimate drawing room ballad, the acme of a programme of Peter Dawson's ballads: those who feel themselves striding out when the bold opening measures are played, only to be pulled back by the sudden repeated *rum-tiditty-tum-tum* in the dark minor key as they enter the 'Old Mulmein Pagoda' to find their 'Burma gal a-settin': they show that they are mere youngsters in the business of ballad singing for Oley Speaks' *On the Road to Mandalay*, published in 1935, was the last of four settings of Kipling's poem, which Peter Dawson made famous. He recorded Willebey's

¹³⁴Arlen, A., 1957, 12.07

¹³⁵*Clancy of the Overflow*, Arlen, Paterson, Aschenberg, London, 1948, music folio A

¹³⁶some mm blocked out with paper; sometimes rhythmic structure altered, eg beginning 5 mm turned into $\frac{3}{4}$; many performance markings by Peter Dawson.

¹³⁷newspaper, 1982, 03.30

1909 *Mandalay* in 1912, featured Hedgecock's *Mandalay* can be found in programmes from 1914 - 1933, and Cobb's *Mandalay* can be found in a 1937 BBC programme.

Peter Dawson's version of Oley Speaks' popular, *alla marcia* composition is in C major, the range Bb-e' with its penultimate optional top f'. At the end of the third verse, before the return to the refrain, Peter Dawson has created an optional low G, in place of the printed g. In performance he sang the three verses - 1. 'By the old Moulmein ... ', 2. 'er petticoat ... ', 3. 'Ship me ... '. A manuscript shortening 'return to voice' pasted in after Verse 2, is indicative of his belief that the audience wanted the singer to get on with the job of telling his story, rather than listen to the pianist. For Peter Dawson dealt rather summarily with his accompanists; a necessary evil at best from his printed remarks and Gerald Moore's response:¹³⁸

When the bluff good-natured Peter Dawson in his *Fifty Years of Song* suggests that the ideal arrangement for a performance is for the accompanist and his piano to be hidden from view in order that the public may be able to feast their eyes on the singer alone and not witness the apoplectic entry and exit of the accompanist, the fussy turning of the pages: when I recall the greatest compliment I ever had from him was that I was the only accompanist in his experience who did not *bother* him, I feel less indulgent, even though his world was the variety theatre rather than the concert hall.

Those familiar with *On the Road to Mandalay* may think the poem has only three verses, the middle one often cut - to avoid too much repetition, to ensure the second verse is not offensive, and get to the extremely effective climax the sooner - will be surprised to find that five verses have been set variously; they begin:

- By the old Mulmein pagoda
- When the mist was on the rice fields,
- 'er petticoat was yellar
- But that's all shove behind me
- Ship me somewhere's east of Suez

Willeby has omitted 'Ship me somewhere's east of Suez'. His verses, in D major, are in 4_4 , but the common refrain, changes to B major in a lilting 6_8 . The range, low G# to eb', with an optional low F#, creates a rather low tessitura. Peter Dawson has written 'here in C major' when the second verse should return to D. He may have used more because he has written 'here in C major' again at the final chorus and changed the words to match the Oley Speaks' version.

The Cobb *Mandalay* is in a very straightforward F major, range A-d'. The verses are in 4_4 , the chorus in 3_4 . Verse 1 & 2 are laid out over the top of each other with first and second time measures. After the end of the second verses Peter Dawson has written 'cut to page 6', which meant all pertaining to 'But that's all shove behind me', then a return to 'ship me somewhere's East of Suez' and its refrain: 'On the road to Mandalay, where the old flotilla

¹³⁸Moore, G., 1962, *Am I Too Loud*

lay, with the sick beneath the awnings, when we went to Mandalay ...'.¹³⁹ Perhaps the impetus for the combination of sections of each was a request to sing *Mandalay*, to which he could have replied in his waggish manner: "Which one?". He first recorded the *Scena*, titled *Potpourri*, in 1945 for Australian outlets only and used a *Scena* in programmes before the final recording in 1955.¹⁴⁰ He did not hold the Hedgecock version, although from its recurrence over a longer time span, it appears to have been the best known number prior to the Speaks' version, so is not clear from his papers how he put the *Scena* together. While it may be assumed that the alterations refer to the *Potpourri*, some could be performance markings; however, but the key changes to C major do suggest the 1945 recording because that is the key of the Speaks version, which begins the recording. The two recordings, of merely one section from each composition, tied loosely with an exotic interlude as necessary are curiously dissimilar: 1945: Speaks, Willebey, Hedgecock, Cobb; 1955: Speaks, Hedgecock, Willebey, Cobb. Peter Dawson obviously liked Speaks' robust music to catch the attention, and favoured the waltzing finish, which has no effect ending. Either version is a hotch-potch. It may have had meaning for the singer, but only manages to highlight how old-fashioned some of his music had become.

¹³⁹The score is signed Peter Dawson, Haberfield

¹⁴⁰Burgis, 1981: 1945, 09.12, EA3295, Hammond organ, Maynard Wilkinson; programme Hobart, 1951.04.28; Burgis, 1981: 1955, 05.04, HMV & EG8157, LSO, Charles Mackerras

Chapter 6

part 2: Peter Dawson's musical character

Gerald Moore believed that 'Peter was much happier pottering than practising; his delight was to spend his day tinkering in the house or garden',¹ but the review of his substantial repertoire, and his own compositions in particular suggests that Moore should have known better. Peter Dawson certainly applied his creative skills to other activities - he liked painting, liked gardening - but an underlying quality in his character, his work ethic, was fundamental to his success. Perhaps the image of casualness he portrayed in interviews was an outward show of the pleasure he enjoyed in the fulfilment of the task for which he was not only ably fitted but so well prepared. Could this casualness have fooled Moore too?

Work was work and fun was fun: as the studio tales indicate, he could switch from nonsense to seriousness from one moment to the next. He was an energetic man. There is no doubt that his practical work could not have thrived without diligence, even if it was carefully hidden under a bluff public exterior.

Neatness and tidiness were unquestionable part of his character. He - and his wife - dressed correctly and fashionably. They were conscious of rank and courtesy. This outward correctness is reflected in the tidiness of his bank pay-in slips, neatly numbered, identified, and tied in bundles, in the way he catalogued his music, and in the precision of his musical writing.

Even accepting that all practitioners become more expert with experience, miscellaneous examples of manuscript paper, prepared for writing a tidy copy of the composition,² indicate that Peter Dawson was careful and methodical. Once he had an idea for a composition he had a plan and understanding of the final shape of the song. On the manuscript of *My Mine of Memories*, for example, he has planned the spacing and even drawn lines to ensure that the letters in the title were all the same height.³ His manuscripts are written in small, clear, neat notation. The manuscript, *Moonlight Fancy*, which he was composing when he was 75-years old⁴ appears to be a first sketch: it is titled *Quiet Moments Series* and is sub-titled *Moonlight Fancy*. The melody is still in pencil but the name of the piece has been inked over. It is based on a poem cut from a newspaper. The poem, written out like prose, titled *Moonlight Fancy*, is in a column titled *Quiet Moments Series*, and signed *Southern Cross*. On the next page, another cutting: *Dreamboat* (S.Cross) (J.P.McC), is pasted onto the manuscript - but it got no further.

¹Moore, G., 1962, 38

²Dawson, n.d MS5030/ Music folio package L: manuscript, various sizes: some double pages, some blank, some partly prepared

³first page planned out; title in pencil shows lines drawn to ; first 4 mm only in biro. Measures are marked neatly and evenly on the page in pencil.

⁴newspaper, 1957, 11.25

Peter Dawson claims that his compositional method was 'to become thoroughly familiar with the lyric, then to write the tune, and then to play it over and over, altering and polishing'.⁵ This care and preparation may be observed in the detailed organisation of his music. Each song was kept separate in folders arranged in an alphabetical order. Most were preserved in some way, with a cover, often sewn on. Songs, which appeared in albums, like folk-songs, arias, or lieder, were taken from their album and given a separate cover. The last page of one song leads into the beginning of the song he was using; sometimes the first page of the next song appears after the last page. Page numbers may also indicate that they come from within an album.⁶ Carl Loewe's *Edward* may serve as an example. It is clear that it has been taken from Loewe Album No.1,⁷ because the pages have been pasted in a cover with the identification 'Edward, Loewe, Op.1, No.1, original in E^b minor' written in blue pencil across the foregoing music page. The story of *Edward* from *The Manchester Guardian* of 8 September, 1922 is pasted on the inside front cover.

Another example is Edward German's *Kangaroo & Dingo*, first identified on 29 May, 1911.⁸ This printed music must have been taken from a series of songs, as the first page used is the end of another song. The pages have been stuck on paper and enclosed in a brown paper cover, with title, author and composer in Peter Dawson's handwriting on the cover, with an additional note: 'Begin in A major, End in A major Time 2 mins 5 secs', and the ubiquitous stamp: 'Peter Dawson Ealing'.

When composing he uses the simpler tonalities and follows the tradition of writing the voice melody in the G clef, regardless of voice type, as is common in printed popular sheet music. This does not indicate limited musical knowledge but an awareness of popular publishing practice for piano accompaniments and orchestral parts are in their correct clefs. As Peter Dawson was such an active concert artist it might be thought that most of his recordings would be with piano accompaniment. On the contrary, the bulk are with 'orchestra', that is, with the small studio band. Orchestral parts proliferate among the multiple-copy numbers, many in Peter Dawson's own neat script. Writing scores and parts is not only an arduous and time-consuming task, it requires knowledge of instrumentation and a facile writing technique, which can only be gained from extensive study and long experience.

The analysis of the ballads, including his own compositions, has shown, what may well have been presumed; that the rhythm of the bulk of these numbers is also simple: Common time, $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$; less frequently $\frac{6}{8}$ as galloping triplets, two beats to the measure. $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{8}$ are only used occasionally. A song were in any more complex rhythm would have pretensions to a different quality.

Idiosyncratically, whether a piece is in major or minor, Peter Dawson only

⁵Sydney newspaper, 1951, 04.25

⁶all examples taken from NFSA, MS5030, Sheet Music Folios unless otherwise identified.

⁷edition Litolf, Braunschweig, No. 2241 a, page 79

⁸in McQueen, 1996, *Tom Roberts*; also programmes 1931, 09.15, 1936, 09.09

refers to major keys. On the front of *Drake*⁹ Peter Dawson has written 'original key G'. This particular copy, dated in pencil '1942' but also signed 'Mildura, Victoria, Australia 27.4.49',¹⁰ is a transposition into D minor, so the original was in E minor, the same key signature as G major. There are many other examples of this expression of the relative minor as major: *Is My Team Ploughing*, Fm (PD note: A^b); *On the Idle Hill of Summer*, Dm ends D (PD: F ends D); on another transposed copy of *On the Idle Hill of Summer*, Cm ends C (PD: E^b ends C), *Way Down the South Coast Road*, Bm (PD: D major). Even though his own manuscript composition, *The Flag that will never be furled*, is in Am, the range, C-e', suggests he would regard it as C.

In discussion of recordings, concert programmes and radio programmes the timing of songs has been generalised as three minutes to three and a half minutes each. From this generalisation it could be hypothesised that approximately three minutes is the instinctive or 'natural' length of most songs. As Peter Dawson timed all the songs on a particular BBC programme at 3' or 3½'¹¹ it appeared to support the generalisation but needed more evidence to sustain it.

Using the Peter Dawson collection as samples it is possibly to be more accurate. Each number of the *Maud* cycle was timed: 122, 322, .45, 200, 104, 200, 235, 200, 400, 118, 350. Of another 136 compositions, the number of songs with accurate timings under 2 minutes was only 5; 57 between 2'-2'45"; 57 between 3'-3'45"; 17 over 4'.¹² Those over four minutes were usually arias or oratorio, which included recitative; the median was 4'30". The aria, *She alone charmeth my sadness*, was timed at 5'; the longest, *The Three Souls*, one of his own compositions,¹³ was nearly six minutes. The greater number of songs were fairly evenly spread among 2', 2'30", 3', 3'30", hence the generalisation 'three minutes' could be a reasonable method of calculating the length of a concert programme, but would need to be far more accurate for recording or broadcasting.

Many examples have demonstrated his capacity for altering music to suit varying performance conditions: arrangements of folk-songs, tailoring songs to the recording medium; shortening of the number of measures in a phrase, truncating interludes, added high or low effect notes, arranging and transposing.

On a copy of *Kashmiri [Love] Song*¹⁴ appears an enigmatic note by Peter Dawson: 'Turn on old Time Alas these chimes "Traveller's all in very

⁹ music: Richard Henty, words: W. Hewlett, Peter Dawson ms, London, not dated but Burgis 1981: recorded Homebush 1948, 01.07

¹⁰ ABC/AA, 1949, 01.24: was in Mildura as part of itinerary February 7 - July 2.

¹¹ for example BBC, 1937, 04.25

¹² 122' = 15, 2'15" = 18, 2'30" = 18, 2'45" = 6; 3' = 17, 3'15" = 12, 3'30" = 22, 3'45" = 6.

¹³ pub: Chappell, London, 1937. but one copy signed by Peter Dawson on 22 February, 1961, which suggests that he was working on a revision the year he died.

¹⁴ pre-dates Peter Dawson. One of *Four Indian Love Lyrics* by Amy Woodforde-Finden, published by Boosey, 1903. Boosey, 1931, 28: Amy Woodforde-Finden *Indian Love Lyrics* 'enormous sale here and in America'.

station" (Balfe)', which gives a clue to the recording date. *Travellers all of every station (The Siege of Rochelle)*, was recorded in 1923 with piano but the orchestral version appears to have been re-recorded the work with orchestra in 1927, when his own 'revised & edited' version was published by Ashdown. The procedure can be followed through five different manuscripts. In one he has cut measures 12-20 on page 9, and altered the final word grouping to praise Britain, concluding with the words *God Save the King*. This manuscript, marked *Piano Conductor* indicates that the work was arranged for orchestra, and, as observed, quite commonly the conductor conducted from the piano score rather than from a full score. Peter Dawson has also entered information about the original: 'composed 1835. Michael William Balfe operatic baritone, an Irishman. Born 15 May 1808 Died 20 October 1870'.

On another preparation for orchestration Peter Dawson has printed: *newly revised & edited Peter Dawson* and numbered some of the measures, but the full score and full set of parts¹⁵ have been arranged *Henry Geehl*. The number of pencil alterations on two more sets of parts suggest that this was a new version too; probably all evolving from the piano version marked: *Abbridged [sic] and arranged for concert performances:- Peter Dawson, Ealing, May 20th 1927*.

In his field Peter Dawson was the 'compleat composer'. This ability extended to the preparation for publication of sheet music. Printed music must be well designed; it is intended to be read easily, to have page turns at a musically convenient point, and to finish at the bottom of the last page. As a composer, Peter Dawson was aware of design characteristics, even when he started to set out the song initially. The process, from manuscript to printed music, can be traced in his own *Song of the Drum and Deep-Sea Mariner*.¹⁶

The Peter Dawson manuscript is headed *Song of the Drum (Recit & Air)* and is described as 'written and adapted' by J. P. McCall for Swan. The following pages carry various instructions for printing including line and page endings. Also on page 1: *Copyright MCMXXIII usual copyright notice, 3034, ignore large capitals. Please follow word copy throughout*. On page 2: small *m* (Martial), small *g* (God); small *h* (His); page 3, last 4 measures '*see four bars attached*'; page 5, 2nd system: right hand accompaniment pasted over; 3rd system accompaniment pasted over; page 8: *Please note Mr Andrews is posting MSS showing optional notes for last few bars of voice part. cover: stamp: Swan & Co...Lond; and in pencil: 6pp; 2 proofs wanted tomorrow (Friday); Two first proofs*.

Deep-Sea Mariner also begins with a manuscript. Over the title he has written *original Key D*; on page 1 of this manuscript *C minor one key only*. This manuscript is in D minor; the three flats for C minor are only at the beginning of the first stave, so someone else had to do the transposition. The original, in 4_4 , *moderato*, has the range d-f'; the printed version c-e^b.

¹⁵being: V1 x 3, V2 x 3, Va x 2, C x 2, B, 2 Fl, 2 Ob, 2 Cl, 2 Bn, 2 Horns, 2 Tr, 3 Tromb, Tymp/Drums, Harp

¹⁶*Song of the Drum*, J. P. McCall, W. B Andrews, Swan, London, 1933 [music folio C]; *Deep-Sea Mariner*, J. P. McCall, Allan Barker, Swan, London, 1934 [music folio C]

There are numbers on some measures throughout, which indicate line and page endings. On page 2 he changes the key from D minor to D major; at measure 5 writes an optional d' instead of f[#]; page 3: returns to D minor, measure 4: optional d' (instead of f'), measure 9: optional a (instead of f'); page 4, measure 9: optional f (instead of high f'), measures 10-12: manuscript pasted over, measures 11-12: manuscript pasted over twice. On page 1, along the edge he has written: *copyright MCMXXXIV by Swan & Co (Music Publishers) Ltd 3041*, with the stamp under: *Peter Dawson Ealing*. The score was then ready for printing; he has signed it *J. P. McCall 1934*.

All Peter Dawson's compositions were deliberately written for the popular ballad market, not only because they would sell well, but because this was his aesthetic niveau. He was the accepted popularist voice in a specific genre, so his style of composition represents the underlying taste of British culture. This may be qualified to read conservative British culture, for there were certainly subversive trends towards American popular music, which ultimately truncated Peter Dawson's lucrative recording career.

His musical abilities were directed towards ensuring that his listening public enjoyed what it heard at a simplistic level and was enthused when the song finished. A good performer - he was one of the best - empathises with the audience; the audience, in turn empathises with the singer, identifies with the singer, is transported by the singer, becomes, in effect, a substitute singer. No matter how sophisticated the repertoire survey may appear, the crowds he drew were not the sophisticated but a broad-based general public, who would seldom, if ever, attend more esoteric concerts.

His musical ingenuity showed itself in many ways. His predilection for singing in English made his songs easily acceptable. Neither from his training nor from his experience would he consider stepping outside the simplest major keys or use any musical ending other than the move from sub-dominant or dominant to tonic; in fact, one characteristic which led to the banality of the music he favoured, was the constancy of approach to a perfect authentic cadence (${}^6_4 V 1$).

If the more singable penultimate note falling to the tonic was favoured it would most often be the fifth of chord V, that is the 2nd note of the scale, falling to the tonic. In such a case this would be the effect note - loud and with a pause - with the relatively unimportant tonic held over a brief exciting postlude (or 'payout'). Less often, the third, the leading note - technically less singable because it rises, aurally less exciting because the semi-tone step does not differentiate the melody sufficiently - approaches the tonic, in which case the last note may receive the final dramatic attack, or conversely, may peter out in a pianissimo ending, which could even incorporate some sort of embellishment. The other method of retreating into a pianissimo finish was to descend slowly to very low notes over the same formulaic harmony.

The most outstanding effect, the 'operatic' effect, was the use of the bass note of the dominant chord at the octave: in this case, the penultimate note is very high, being a fifth above the tonic, at the limit of the singer's vocal scala. The ending of Mozart's *Non piu andrai*, 'cherubino alla vittoria, alla gloria militar', is composed as a coda, in which the final formula for 'alla

gloria militar' is a three-fold repetition from the dominant to the tonic, extended musically like a military tattoo disappearing. Each phrase should gradually becoming quieter, suggesting that Figaro is leading the dejected Cherubino away and the curtain falls on an empty stage. It is never done this way. Although the postlude is played out in the orchestra, closing the act with this musical form anti-climax, Mozart cannot compete with sensationalist production.

The ending of *Non piu andrai* lacked a flamboyant conclusion for the popularist concert platform, so Peter Dawson added a resounding g' to the second last note and the extensive postlude truncated to the last two kettledrum rolls.¹⁷ Do not blame Peter Dawson, he probably inherited a long-accepted concert form. Blame rather the proliferation of balladeers, convinced that every song needed this blatant obviousness.

From the analysis of Peter Dawson's own compositions, his repertoire and his editing conclusions may be drawn about his type of voice and its range. In 1945 the cartoon character, Mr Potts, was talking to a friend:¹⁸

- 1) Friend: Hey, you know that song you used to sing at parties
Potts: I suppose you mean *A Banjo Song*!
- 2) Friend: That's the one!
Potts: Ah! Its a grand old favourite of mine!
- 3) Friend: I heard Peter Dawson sing it on the air last night!!
Potts: Did you like it?
- 4) Friend: 'Struth. Yes! I never knew it was such a good song.

A 'Peter Dawson song' was a song anyone could sing. It could be expected that by 1945 the drawing-room idyll had disappeared; far from it: there would not have been a party where someone was not asked to 'Give us a song' - and the song would very likely be one of the more recent songs, which Peter Dawson had made popular.

Peter Dawson wrote unashamedly for himself. He seemed to have the knack of writing a good singable tune. The baritone e' features consistently as the common top of his comfortable range, while the baritone f' is generally reserved for use as the effect note. When listening to recordings this range sounds particularly easy, that is, not as if he is exploring the outer range of the voice but is using a comfortable range which does not strain the voice at all. This may be due to an excellent technique, but it does suggest - and sounds - as if the voice simply 'sat' there, that it was his natural gift, his 'comfort-zone'.

¹⁷*Away with philandering* (a) (one of three): 3'40"; pp.247-254 taken from an old aria collection (old Novello-style size and printing), sewn into cardboard cover; stamped: "*Non piu andrai*" Peter Dawson, Piano with Mozart under, Boosey & Co; inside p247 x-out in blue pencil, signature: Peter Dawson. pp.248-254 Peter Dawson hw English in ink: *Now your days* etc.

Away with philandering (b) optional G penultimate chord; note two different decorations with pause on repeat brillante; orchestral parts as listed in blue pencil in Conductor score: V1 x 3, V2 x 2, Viola, (no Cello), Bassi x 2, Fl, Ob, Bassoon, Trumpet or Cornet, Horns, Tymp; 14 parts German piano vocal score as *Conductor*

¹⁸*Mr & Mrs Potts* in Smith's Weekly, 1945, 05/05, p.13 - in Dawson, 1945, 12.31, collection of sketches and newspaper cuttings

Testing the 1982 recordings against our current 440cpm¹⁹ the pitch was just a nudge lower but not enough to suggest a lower norm; that is, the music Peter Dawson was singing was roughly at the same pitch as today, so any definition of range should be still quite accurate. From the samples tested the lowest note was G; the highest, g', occurred only in his earliest recordings. He did not make a habit of singing the top a' that he claimed was possible. The evidence suggests that he only sang a substantial g' which disappeared after steady recording and concert work had chewed up his youthful enthusiasm, to be replaced by the professionally pragmatic habit of staying within comfortable limits because he was singing large programmes day after day.

In later years any difficulties of range or tessitura were overcome by transpositions. If pitch remained constant during his lifetime, his publicised range, Eb - a', may be exaggerated: if the lower 'French pitch' was used, there would be no difference between today's g' and a 'French' a^b; a' may be stretching belief a bit. The low notes were not those of a heavy bass but of a baritone with low notes, not significant below G. In reality, his most comfortable range was A-f', like other baritones.

Although Peter Dawson is described as baritone, bass-baritone, bass soloist, robust baritone, even on different pages of the same book,²⁰ he is generally remembered as the 'Australian baritone'.²¹ Talk of bass or bass-baritone comes from his good low notes and the recording quality. In reality, Peter Dawson's voice was not 'big', simply very well focussed. This is confirmed many times. A concert reviewer made the remark during the successful 1931 season:²²

The Dawson voice is not big, but is beautiful in texture, smoothly produced throughout an exceptional range, and so flexible that it could negotiate the Figaro patter song from "The Barber" without trouble - in English. The singer's diction is faultlessly clear, while his work is further enhanced by an earnest yet genial platform manner.

On his death Gladys Moncrieff responded for Australian colleagues:²³

As a singer, his voice had a lovely warm quality. His phrasing was fantastic, his breathing wonderfully controlled. He was 79 when he died, but even a few years ago his voice was so beautiful any student could have studied his technique.

Kenneth Neate:²⁴

As Gerald Moore writes the voice was not huge, but it was not small either it was exactly focussed and marvellously modulated according to the text and was a model of clear diction due to an articulation that was born of a fine ear and innate musicality.

¹⁹pitch is measured in cycles per minute

²⁰Brisbane, K. (ed), 1991, *Entertaining Australia, an illustrated history*, pp.137, 157, 251

²¹Hobart newspaper, *The Mercury*, 1962

²²newspaper, 1931, 06.20, *Music in Australia*, p10

²³newspaper, 1961, 10.16, *The Peter Dawson I Knew*

²⁴Neate, 1984, 06.14

and international colleagues:²⁵

Mr. Joseph Hislop, the international operatic and lyric tenor, said: "Peter Dawson was one of those singers who could get right into the hearts of the people because he could put the words of any ballad over so distinctly and so well that they were all with him immediately. There is no doubt he was an excellent singer."

Norman Allin, professor of singing at the Royal Academy, and principal bass at Covent Garden, said Peter Dawson was "always a fine singer. Peter had a lightish baritone voice, but he had perfect technique. That was one reason why he was able to make such fine records. In the early days very big vocal sounds would damage a recording, but Peter was always a good recorder.

Most judgements about Peter Dawson's repertoire and technique are made from his recorded material: one perspicacious commentator, Michael Scott, reveals a sound knowledge of voices:²⁶

Dawson's decision to sing only in concert, his preference for translating everything into English, and his appearance on the cheaper Plum Label records encourage the idea that he was somehow second class. It is true that he was not an intellectual interpreter, there was nothing cerebral in his approach, but his musical instincts were of the finest and his singing has that kind of perfect composure and simplicity that conceals the greatest skill. The control, detail and finish of his art put him in the very highest league and it is no exaggeration to compare him to Santley and Battistini.

... as with Santley, [his top notes] were made possible by resisting the temptation to try and produce a big sound, especially in the passage notes. The registers are correctly equalised and blended, the tone finely focussed and there is not an infirm note throughout his compass.

Although the voice is not remarkable for resonance or sonority, his singing is of classical excellence ... speech is simply heightened into song, the words coloured by singing tone. The ease of it is the art that disguises art.

and after the appearance of the commemorative album the German compiler Jürgen Kesting,²⁷ while criticising his operatic arias, praises his 'instrumental precision in singing Handel'. Furthermore, referring to several famous interpreters of Handel, he opines that 'others don't come within a mile of him'.

Although his success as a concert singer was in part due to the empathy which he could achieve with his concert demeanour, the overriding characteristic must have been aural, for he was equally successful in recording and broadcasting. The fact that ratings would go up whenever he sang on the Melbourne ABC *Village Glee Club* in his later years, is indicator enough.

Today, with more familiarity with continental voice production, some

²⁵Melbourne newspaper, 1961, 09.27

²⁶Scott, M., 1979, 180-182, *The Record of Singing*: 'Singers from the English speaking world: 40. Baritones & Bases: No. 132: Peter Dawson': 'at one time there could hardly have been a home throughout the entire British Empire which boasted a gramophone that did not have at least one title of Dawson's'

²⁷Kesting, c.1983, 367, *Die grossen Sanger*

modern ears may find the much-praised vocal technique somewhat old-fashioned. The top of the voice may seem too consistently 'covered': the ease with which he moves through the *passagio* achieved by excessive darkening of the vowels. The vowels constantly change colour throughout the range, being especially obvious when he makes large musical leaps into higher registers. The purist may be irritated by too many diphthongs in the vowels. The clarity of diction and the sparkling coloratura for which he was famous may seem more 'instrumental' than mellifluous. After earlier flirtations with the higher, exciting upper notes, he settled comfortably into a fixed middle range, not exposing his voice to debilitating strain, but also presenting a predictable sound, well executed, but with no surprises. Those familiar with the repertoire may find reason to quibble sometimes with the care given to the printed rhythm. And the tasteless addition of the platitudinous ultimate or penultimate effect high note to so many popular ballads and to finer music, apart from its musical pointlessness, can lack sympathetic vibrations, which leads to loss of warmth and roundness. His contemporaries either believed in his prowess or dared not criticise, for he was constantly praised. In a letter shortly after his death Gerald Moore, by then established as the most eminent English accompanist, wrote:²⁸

Everything - vocally speaking - came easy to him for he had a first-class technique. The voice though splendidly resonant was not extremely powerful. He made the listener convinced it was big because it was so perfectly placed. An idea of its range, its freedom of delivery, its flowing ease can be gauged from his record 'Love can I only tell thee'. His inimitable humour comes to the fore in his 'Simon the cellarer' especially when he portrays Dame Marjorie.

which compares with his book, *Am I Too Loud*, where he noted the speed and casualness with which Peter Dawson could learn a new song:²⁹

With a more mature outlook, with industry, he could have become a serious artist, but as it was he settled down as a star turn in *Variety* where he had an easy and instantaneous success.

The study of Peter Dawson's repertoire and his compositions reveals much about the man that has never been discussed. The range of his concert repertoire indicates a determination to present a broad range of quality music to his audiences before indulging in the pot-boilers, on which his fame rested. It is also significant that he had also recorded most of his concert repertoire, including all his own published compositions. He was the practical knight-errant of English Art-song composers, filling his programmes with their works and arguing that their compositions could match anything from the Continental.

It is curious that, despite this plethora of contrasting types of music, he should be remembered as a ballad singer. The explanation may lie both with his empathy with this style or the popularity of this type of recording. They were generally purveyed on the cheapest, and therefore the most

²⁸Moore, G., c.1961, hw, to Ron Hughes of PDAS

²⁹Moore, G. 1962

accessible label, and were aimed at the solid middle class end of the market. It is clear that Peter Dawson was a pragmatist, not a purist. It is therefore not surprising that it was only the purists who objected to the music he sang. On the other hand, it is significant that they never criticise the voice or technique, but only the choice of repertoire.

The answer may lie in his own compositions, for, whatever pretensions he may have had to greater music, he steadfastly composed in a niveau that was acceptable to that broad public which supported him. Therefore, it must be concluded that his basic instincts really did lie with the popular ballad; further, that there was subliminal quality in his singing, which was acceptable to the broad listenership but isolated him from supporters of the 'higher' echelons of classical music.

As one of his early accompanists, as an Australian composer, and as Musical Director of the ABC, William James had some regrets about the path Peter Dawson had been fated to travel.³⁰

I've always felt it rather a shame that ballads were so popular in England when his career began. It was the ballad era - in the drawing room, the stage, and in recording. Peter was a very great musician. He sang lieder and oratorio. Probably he would have been an opera singer if his career had started today, when people are so much better educated.

Kenneth Neate³¹ too supports the mystique of lost operatic opportunity:

What can I say of him that has not been stated before? He was of the finest of men, a truly great singer who could have easily had a career in opera should he have chosen to have done so

But this friendly prognosis has already been discussed and rejected, for Peter Dawson had neither the stature nor vocal capacity for noble baritone roles. As he had accepted that he was not destined for an operatic career, he had also accepted that, despite many opportunities to express himself in quality repertoire, his fortune lay with the ballad. A light-hearted 1939 interview sums it up: *Peter Dawson Prefers Tum-Tiddleley-Um Songs*.³² By then he had fought the good fight; it was better to be pragmatic. 'Practise every day? Not he. Practise on the audience! Haven't practised any other way for fifteen years.' Perhaps he really was 'a man of the soil', who tried to make music more egalitarian.³³

The musical world is divided into three classes: the highbrow (10 per cent), the would-be highbrow (10 per cent), those who like a good tune (75 per cent) ... 5 per cent incorrigibles ...

Now I am a man of the soil: I come from the people and what gifts I am fortunate to possess I want to give back to the people. My object is 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'.

³⁰newspaper, 1961, 10.16, *The Peter Dawson I knew*

³¹Neate, 1984, 06.14 to PDAS

³²Melbourne newspaper, *Herald*, 1939, 05.29

³³Dawson, 1951, 140, quoting his own article, *Canned Music* in a 1951 Melbourne *Herald*.

Which makes the comment of Vose,³⁴ who really understood the soul of the British listeners, the more interesting:

To many people, Dawson was a classical singer ... to those millions who prefer 'Popular' music but enjoy good 'more conservative' songs. They are aeons away in taste from Opera and Classical Orchestral Music. ... so they regard Dawson as a Bard of the people. To them *Mandalay* and the rest were 'highbrow' songs. *The Floral Dance* and all the rest of them, became stock items at [wartime] camp concerts. It was red-blooded stuff, the War was not a time for anaemic music.

The collation of performing information coupled with his professional habits, demonstrates that this is an extraordinarily narrow perception of Peter Dawson, who emerges as a remarkable musician, yet one whose musical education is veiled in mystery. It raises the questions: what was his musical education? How did he develop his musical aesthetic?

As the quality of the adult male voice is not conspicuous until his latter 'teens there may have been no deliberate musical preparation before that, hence there is a general perception in the profession that singers have not had the same length of training as pianists or instrumentalists. Singers may rebut such sweeping statements by examples of established artists, who have sung in childrens' choirs or cathedral choirs as children, or have been trained as instrumentalists and later elected singing as their career. Notwithstanding, it is no coincidence that opera houses employ repetiteurs to teach singers their roles.

Repetiteurs, as the name implies, repeat music; they are pianists employed to play a particular part over and over again, until the singer with little more than a tenuous grasp of music, has learned it. As a general rule, the singer sings from memory in public; it is only customary to hold music in public in oratorio or in some more obscure works. In the recording studio, where the singer is not seen and where speed is an imperative, adroit musicianship is often a greater advantage than vocal prowess.

Peter Dawson appears to fit the profile of the untrained professional. It could assumed that he became proficient enough to satisfy the industry and maintain his position simply by graduating from regular singing lessons to learning his appointed repertoire.

But the evidence shows that Peter Dawson's musical abilities went far beyond that norm: major publishers published his compositions, he had the skills to prepare music for publication, to transpose, to prepare orchestral scores, and to remember a song so well that he could write it out from memory when he had lost the original.³⁵ Those skills could only be learnt and polished by long experience. Yet, although he had all the idiosyncratic musical abilities related to his passion for composition, neither he nor his biographers refer to advanced musical studies.

Tracing evidence of his musical training has proved elusive. In his book he dismissed any formality in the home. He remembers that with so many children the piano got a constant bashing; that on Sundays only his father's

³⁴Vose, 1987, 133

³⁵see *The Aussie Spirit* dated 6 November 1943.

American organ was played.³⁶ At least music was played freely in the house as part of family life, but then that was quite common in that era. Someone must have played those instruments, but it was not Peter Dawson. His younger sister, Jessie, was the pianist credited as his accompanist and with teaching him the notes of that first *Messiah*. His nephews reported that later Nan accompanied him, and he once said that he worked with an accompanist every day, even if he had nothing particular to do. Working so constantly with a pianist suggests learning by rote or with enough grasp of music to learn his melody line.

Such dependence could not explain Peter Dawson's claim that he recorded *The Cobblers Song*, his second most popular recording, *prima vista*.³⁷

Fred Gaisberg handed me a song and said, "You might have a look at that, Peter." After glancing through it I said I thought it was a good number and asked, "Do you want me to make it?" "Yes", replied Fred, "right away." I was recording the song in ten minutes.

While there is good reason to take Peter Dawson's stories with a grain of salt, this one is intended to illustrate that he had the ability to read music quickly. To 'sight-read' music is a very cultivated form of musicianship, one associated with those who have read music prolifically since childhood. As there has been no prior indication that he had this experience, the story would be treated with suspicion were it not for corroboration from Gerald Moore:³⁸

With the possible exception of John McCormack he [Peter Dawson] was one of the finest sight-readers of any singer I have met and would take up a copy of a new song, seize immediately on its salient features, and be ready and willing to perform or record it forthwith. Songs of this nature, it may be argued, do not deserve time wasted on them, but it will be conceded that a man must be endowed with great facility and self-confidence to dare to mete out such cavalier treatment by way of preparation for a performance.

When Peter Dawson discusses *Boots*, he begins 'I have always enjoyed composing'³⁹ Having conceived the idea of the song en route to a concert he rushed to a piano at his hotel:

And there I tried out the melody, the chords etc., and began making alterations. I wrote out enough to satisfy myself that the foundation of the song was established ...

What does 'always enjoyed composing' mean? As he worked with an accompanist, it suggests that he did not play the piano proficiently; on the

³⁶op cit among others newspaper, 1951, 04.25: Mother, also Scottish "had a sweet voice" but never sang publicly. no outstanding musical talent in the family but nine children in the house and "the piano got a thrashing". Strict Presbyterianism sent them all to church twice on Sunday, and forbade piano playing on the Sabbath but [his father's American] organ ...

³⁷Dawson, 1951, 37-38

³⁸Moore, G., 1962, 38, *Am I too loud*

³⁹Dawson, 1951, 153

other hand 'tried out the melody, chords etc.,' suggests that he understood harmony, that is, had an intimate understanding of the construction of music. Could he pick out a melody 'with one finger'? Had he taught himself chords?

On several records Burgis identifies him as mouth-organ or tin whistle player⁴⁰, and photos show him playing a ukulele at house parties - which could all be self-taught and restricted to the simplest chords or melodies. As he laid no emphasis on the learning process, it must be inferred that he had acquired skills autodidactically.

As the point has been made that he had the habit of calling all keys 'major', it raises the question, whether his understanding of music came from a system where the major key signature was the only clue necessary to read music? Coupled with Gerald Moore's exceptionally high praise of his sight-reading skill, this habit indicates that he had sung extensively from tonic-solfa notation with a movable 'doh':⁴¹

New trends in Christian hymnody emerged in the nineteenth century ... surge of interest in the teaching of sight-singing ... the "movable do" method, or tonic sol-fa system developed by Curwen, resulted in the widespread popularity of singing classes.

As his sister acted as a repetiteur to teach him the notes for his first *Messiah* arias, it suggests that he did not read music at that time. But through the music of church and Sunday School, his principal source of music during his Adelaide years, he must have learned to read tonic-solfa fluently.⁴² Often just the words of the tonic-solfa were printed under the words of a hymn,⁴³ sometimes both musical notation and tonic-solfa were written together as in his oldest *Bass Album*.⁴⁴ So Peter Dawson's musical aesthetic and sight-reading skill developed in the environment of the church, from those early vocal albums and the oratorios he performed under C. J. Stevens. Later his affinity for tonic-solfa could be translated into recognition of musical notation and autodidactic compositional skills.

His personal musical aesthetic is also coupled with the long survival of the Victorian drawing-room ballad. The ballad had reached its height of popularity when the strength of the Empire was at its zenith. Its life and influence was extended by the talking-machine industry then by radio because it remained valid for the conservative element in British society who never lost their belief in the might of the Empire.

⁴⁰Burgis, 1981: in *Christmas Party*, 1935 'It is inferred that Dawson plays mouth organ and brass (tin) whistle on this record. It is not possible to confirm that he is the culprit, although we do know that he owned such instruments and played them.'

⁴¹Reynolds, W. J., 1963, 67, *A Survey of Christian Hymnology*:

⁴²Reynolds, 1963, 109: Tribute of Praise and Methodist Protestant Hymnal 1882 ... was a revision of previous Methodist hymnals, and was the first official hymnal to use tunes. (In America) Wesleyan Hymn and Tune Book, 1859, reissued as less expensive version as the New Hymn Book in 1881.

⁴³known to the author be used today by some Welsh choirs

⁴⁴album, c.1850: the early C19th Album published by Bayley & Ferguson described in Chapter 4

The ballad can be linked to industrial Victorian Christianity, the Christianity commonly acknowledged throughout Britain as in Australia. Despite a variety of sects, the Church of England and the non-conformist denominations drew on the same musical sources. When Reynolds introduces his survey of church hymnology he is careful to remark that:⁴⁵

One likes what had become familiar. Attitudes toward hymns and hymn singing are much influenced by subjective association. It does not follow that hearty participation involves careful thought or conscious insight regarding content or evaluation. For most of us the hymn has a sacred aura, and to submit it to careful scrutiny sometimes causes inward resentment.

The same could be said about ballads. This may be concluded from the static quality of Peter Dawson's repertoire, which, as broad as it was, always centred around the type of song that had made him famous at the beginning of his career.

Peter Dawson always retained his respect and affection for the hymns of his childhood and early years.⁴⁶ Throughout his life he recorded hymns, he composed hymn-like anthems and sacred songs, during World War 2 he had a regular programme of hymns on radio, in 1949 he featured a hymn or sacred song at the end of each of twelve Doris Arnold Shows for the BBC. The source of this knowledge was the Presbyterian Hymnal, codified during his childhood, which contained much music in common with Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalist congregations⁴⁷ with whom he also fraternised:⁴⁸

Behind the variations and differences of doctrine that separated them, the major non-Anglican 'Nonconformist' denominations of Adelaide were remarkably homogeneous in their religious ethos and in the activities and attitudes they fostered. Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians shared a common hymnody, read the same devotional literature, instructed their children from the same International Sunday School Lessons ... their forms of worship were virtually identical. From overseas ... they imported the same liturgical fashions.

All these Hymnals in turn owed much to the collection the 1860 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* of the Church of England.⁴⁹

The essential underlying principle behind these hymn reforms was 'the

⁴⁵Reynolds, 1963, vii

⁴⁶album, 1902, presentation copy of *The Scottish Anthem Book*: dedication in Peter Dawson hw: 'Wardlow Hill Parish Church, Rev Jack, 1902, Peter Dawson, Rutherglen.' Three anthems are marked for use.

⁴⁷Reynolds, 1963, 110: Presbyterian Hymnal 1870; Presbyterian Hymnal 1895;

⁴⁸Hillard, 'The City of Churches', 65, in Dickey, (Ed), 1992, *William Shakespeare's Adelaide 1860-1930*

⁴⁹Reynolds, 1963, 71 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* consists of 273 hymns, 131 of English origin, 132 Latin translations, 10 German translations. Only 12 of the English hymns were new, 119 had already been in use; p72: first edition Novello 1860; p72: *Hymns Ancient and Modern* became a national institution in England and exerted extraordinary influence throughout the English-speaking world. 'Total sales since 1860 ... 150,000,000 not far wrong'. Presbyterian hymnals in the last half of the nineteenth century reflected strong influences of *Hymns Ancient & Modern*

desire for hymn tunes in the romantic idiom which reflected the romantic movement in secular music.⁵⁰ This romantic idiom associated with secular music can also be observed oratorios written for the British festivals, including *Elijah*, 1846, which had 'touched off the emotional spring of Victorian religious respectability as no other work had done'.⁵¹ Although it became trivialised, this same romantic movement was the driving impulse for the sentimental drawing-room ballad. The border line between hymns and ballads lies in the text; the construction principle is little different. The elements of a good hymn could be equally applied to a good 'Peter Dawson ballad'.⁵²

criteria of superior hymn tunes

Melodic-Rhythmic characteristics:

1. diatonic melody - chromatic only as necessary to modulation
2. predominant use of basic note values in the melody, i.e. quarter notes in 4_4 time
- 3 infrequent syncopation

Harmonic characteristics:

1. frequent changes of harmony within the phrase
2. diatonic harmony including only those chromatic alterations necessary to modulations
3. use of minor as well as major harmonies of the key

Voice relationships:

- 1 Thirds and sixths between sop and alt but more often perfect intervals
2. more melodic bass line, diatonic passing notes

If the songs belted out on his father's American organ on Sundays were not hymns, they were probably the much easier and catchier 'Sankey's':⁵³

by the 1870s a long series of Sunday School song-books, deriving mainly from the US, reached Australia through British publishers. The great and growing popularity of musical displays at Sunday School anniversaries, 'flower services' and so on, created a demand for songs with simple words set to catchy melodies

Demand for Sankey's was prodigious,⁵⁴ and also for music on similar lines by another American evangelist, Alexander.⁵⁵ The 'theology is clear, straight-forward, unambiguous and conservative'⁵⁶; if anything 'there is more pushing of sentiment towards sentimentality' in Alexander's.⁵⁷ Naturally some saw gospel music as a threat to good solid Wesleyan hymns, hymns 'with grit in them'; they saw those pernicious American songs 'as trite and sterile, mere jingles devoid of spiritual nourishment' with 'rum-

⁵⁰Reynolds, 1963, 67

⁵¹ Machlis, 1990, 90 taken from discussion Appendix 5

⁵²Reynolds, 1963, 132

⁵³Mansfield, Joan, 1994, 124, 'The Music of Australian Revivalism' in *Reviving Australia*

⁵⁴Mansfield, 1994, 126: 1900 estimate Sankey's had sold 80 million copies worldwide

⁵⁵(author's note): all these hymns and Sankey's and Alexanders were still popular in Presbyterian and Methodist churches during my youth (c.1936-49)

⁵⁶Mansfield, 1994, 127

⁵⁷Mansfield, 1994, 137

tum-tiddity' tunes; inferior productions set to paltry melodies':⁵⁸

Eric Routley, no admirer of the music of Sankeys, nevertheless makes two comparisons which illuminate their character. Their words, he says, 'have almost always the same nostalgia and yearning for heaven which is heard in negro spirituals; it is only one step from 'Swing low, sweet chariot' to 'Safe in the arms of Jesus'⁵⁹

Nor is it a long step from *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, from Presbyterian and Methodist hymnals, from Sunday School and evangelical songs to the 'Peter Dawson ballad'. It is not a long step from *Rock of Ages* to *It is enough*: from *There is a Green Hill Far Away* to *The Holy City*, from *The Holy City*, *Nazareth* or *Jerusalem* to *Love Triumphant*, *Bless this House*, *Little Prayer I Love You*: from *Those in Peril on the Sea* to Stanford's *Songs of the Sea*, to *Westward Ho!*: from the Austrian hymn, *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz*, which became *God Save the King* to *Rule Britannia*, from *Rule Britannia* to *There'll always be an England*. From Handel's *Why do the nations*, to Sullivan's *Onward Christian Soldiers*, to all the Christian soldiers who marched to war: the Tommy Lads, Drum Majors, Trumpeters, and Sergeant-Majors, who marched through the Empire in 12000 league *Boots*.

Boosey observed that 'it may be safely affirmed that for many years there was genuine [English] taste for oratorio and ballad concerts'.⁶⁰ The dominance of the ballad and the period of the great Victorian oratorio festivals are the same. Together, they represent the musical affection of the later Victorian era, the staple music of Peter Dawson's teachers, the environment in which he developed and the environment of his early professional years. As Peter Dawson strode on to the world stage in the first decade of the twentieth century the popularity of the ballad had actually waned. So Peter Dawson was not a colossus of the ballad; more correctly, he became the colossus of the recorded ballad.

Though he was introduced to the music-hall side of his repertoire through his wife's family, his compositions reveal that his elemental musical aesthetic lay with those drawing-room ballads, with which his name was synonymous, and that these never stray far from their roots in the music, language and culture of English hymns and Victorian Christianity.

Was it significant that Peter Dawson was known as 'the Australian baritone'? Third-generation Australians never question their national character: they were born and bred 'Australian'. Peter Dawson, who proudly expressed his Australian-ness, was one of those first-generation Australians who gradually acquired the pride in their national identity and passed it on to subsequent generations. Even though he lived in London and made his name there, even though the inhabitants of Great Britain took him to their hearts as their legend, they too knew him as an Australian.

To be born in Adelaide of Scottish parents, to grow up there made him a

⁵⁸Mansfield, 1994, 139-40 paraphrased.

⁵⁹Mansfield, 1994, 136

⁶⁰Boosey, 1931, 65

South Australian; he became a citizen of the newly federated Australia just as he left for London originally. Considering the ties of colonial Adelaide to the homeland, his family ties to Scotland, the duration of his life in London, his marriage into and promotion by an English theatrical family, and his fame in England as the outstanding singer of true English ballads, it would not have been surprising if he had become 'Pommyfied', renounced Australia and settled permanently in England. But, as his friend Willaim James said:⁶¹

His name was a household word in all English speaking countries during his career and it will live as long as the ballad [yet] he was so typically Australian in spirit, speech and attitude.

Perhaps part of the respect for Peter Dawson is that he never succumbed to any such temptation - if there was any. He enjoyed being coupled to the idiosyncratic stereotype, flaunted his few moments of soldiering, enjoyed the media's view of him as an achiever from 'Down Under'.

Emigrant parents may have to fight the hold that mother-country and language have over them, but their children 'belong' where they are born. Peter Dawson was a first-generation Australian, an Australian who was unambiguously part of the great British Empire. Those who follow cannot escape the influence of this archetype:⁶²

There is probably no living artist who can sing a robust song - a song of the sea, a song of the open air, or a song of life - like Peter Dawson, and from the recording angle and the concert platform he is one of the most popular singers in the world today.

Peter Dawson was only one of many successful Australian artists working in London; this trend to return to Australia at the end of a working life was common. Was there some such strong affinity with their country of birth that they were inevitable drawn back home? The trend continues today; the difference is that today's Australians are trading on the capital of this early barn-stormer, the man who had survived from the days of those 1909 Mechanics Institute concerts.

If Peter Dawson - and his contemporaries, and today's expatriates - were 'so typically Australian in spirit, speech and attitude' what does that mean?

Marjorie Barnard tries to answer the question.⁶³ She asks: "Is there an Australian people?", and answers: "Yes!". In her view, Australians are not just transplanted Englishmen but a new type, which has evolved from survival instincts. They have no ancestral tradition to fall back on. Success and money speak more loudly than family; one doesn't probe into one's neighbour's business.⁶⁴

⁶¹newspaper, 1961, 10.16

⁶²newspaper, *Daily Sketch*, 1935, 06.08, 'Peter Dawson - "Things I Hate" '

⁶³Barnard, 1962, 669, *A History of Australia*

⁶⁴Gilmour, Dame Mary, 1940, 0.29. has written at the top of the page of her verses in *The Australian Women's Weekly*:

"In the far-off days when I was young - the good old days" - a friend was entertained at the stockyard, the stranger in the parlour. No gentleman ever went uninvited to another man's stockyard. He might see there a hide

An Australian is an individualist. He likes the image of tall and lean, silent, sardonic and brave without show; from the bush; an Anzac, who goes to the dawn service on Anzac day, Ned Kelly and a bonfire in Trafalgar Square. His speech betrays him; from a freemasonry among workmates, a free compulsory education, which threw most together, a language has developed, a language that suggests equality. In truth, the average Australian had always lived in cities, and yet he carries the print of great distances on his eyelids and on his mind ... abroad [he is] conscious of his difference and the size of his country ... in smaller lands [he has] the feeling that he will fall over the edge

Peter Dawson was hardly tall or lean, silent or sardonic, but he was the voice of the Australia, the voice of the illusion. National icons are not flesh and blood, they are abstracts: they are projections of those characteristics which symbolise the way a nation wants to see itself. Peter Dawson had no hidden agenda: he was simply a singer, who wanted to sing. He excelled as a singer, and the consequent fame ensured that he could go on singing. He did not need to question the values of Empire for he had grown successful with those values. Peter Dawson was a reliable constant.

Yet there is an element of sadness and despair in a hero. With his ability he can rise above his fellows, focus attention on himself until he has served his purpose. The hero is inevitably rejected; in the modern parlance, has a use-by date. Fortunately, Peter Dawson was singularly flexible: he was not simply a first-class singer of second-rate songs, a singer of the popular and lucrative; he was a singularly gifted musician. He could continue to make capital out of the reputation he had built up by the time he was fifty. He was able to maintain his buoyant exterior despite his roller-coaster existence. He could camouflage any underlying insecurity. He never admitted any decline.

Goodwill to an old artist is one thing; being at the leading edge of a progressive entertainment industry is another. The successes of those post-War English tours must have been a poultice to his soul: it was a slap in the face for the stinginess of the ABC and re-established him for the final run home. When television arrived, it was merely the next new tool of the entertainment industry, another step away from the drawing-room, away from self-expression. Although he complained about it, Peter Dawson was effective in yet another medium. He might have been grandpa to the young artists appearing with him on that 1955 BBC television show, but he could still sing and talk them off the screen.

Peter Dawson's popularity and his standing in the community cannot be over-estimated. It would be a rare Australian - or Englishman - who had not heard him, or heard of him during his lifetime; a rare Australian - or Englishman - who did not respect him. His influence should not be underrated; his longevity in the business and the breadth of his repertoire influenced male singers literally for decades, not only because they listened to his recordings and attended his concerts, but because teachers tried to reproduce his highly-praised technique in their students and used his repertoire as their library.

or a beast with the wrong brand on it. - One did according to one's kind!
M.G."

None would have been surprised if he had been knighted; many would have been disappointed that he was not. Yet he never received any civil honour. Whether he was ever recommended for civil honours in England, where he was known to royalty and the Prime Ministers of his day, whether he was considered as a candidate in Australia prior to the available information, has not been ascertained, but from 1949 his name was put forward several times.⁶⁵

In December 1949, Mr. G. C. Ghys of Haberfield wrote to the newly elected Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, suggesting that Peter Dawson - whom he did not know personally - be honoured in the New Year's List for 'outstanding service to his country', for 'having enhanced the name of Australia', for 'his benevolence to charity and to young artists', for he 'has battled his unaided way to success, both in art and in business'. No particular honour was suggested. Mr. Ghys was advised that 'the proposal has been noted' - but nothing happened.

In February 1949 Stan Staton,⁶⁶ 'Trading Manager of the Returned Soldiers' League, NSW Branch' approached Thomas Playford, Premier of South Australia, suggesting an honour for one of that State's favourite sons, only to learn that the granting of honours was a Commonwealth prerogative. In November, 1950 Staton passed his information on to another friend of Peter Dawson, Jim Beveridge,⁶⁷ who had close connections to Robert Menzies. To support the efficacy of their nomination Staton included a cutting about Bradman, which concluded:

⁶⁵Australian Archives, CRS: A463/61, item 58/2094, Peter Dawson - Civil Honours [1949-58]

⁶⁶Dawson, Constance diary 1951: 'arrived Australia on the "Orcades" Sat 20th. Ruby Staton met me, we went home to Nannie's. 31 Wolsley St Haberfield.

⁶⁷Beveridge, 1947, MS5030/6/18: print of a painting [a personal painting?] signed: J. P. Beveridge, Melbourne, Victoria, 1947. Beveridge, Janet, 1954, 12, 29: replied to condolences on death of Jim died December 1st.

further extensive investigation has finally identified Jim Beveridge: Who was Jim Beveridge?

- He gave Peter Dawson a print of a painting of himself (1947 MS5030/6/18)
- His wife advised Peter Dawson of his death (letter Janet C. (29.12.54 MS5030/1/5)
- His address and telephone number is in Peter Dawson's telephone/address book
- He presented submission for honours for Peter Dawson by hand to Menzies (Honours file)
- McClaren & Co is given as his Melbourne address.
- Peter Dawson sang at the dinner for the Queen at Parliament House on 16 February 1954. Peter Dawson held a copy of the speech Menzies made to the Queen at Parliament House on that occasion. The speech was printed by McClaren & Co. so Menzies 1954 speech to Queen Elizabeth funded or printed by McClaren & Co.

James Beveridge OBE was the Managing Director of the printing firm, McClaren & Co.

He knew Peter Dawson and Menzies through Melbourne Scots, a Caledonian society, of which Menzies was longtime President.

- This cross-checks to Melbourne Scots dinner menus in Peter Dawson file, at one of which Peter Dawson was the guest-of-honour.
- The print was of a portrait commissioned and painted by William Dargie to celebrate Beveridge's 25 years with McClaren.
- The painting of the Queen in her 'wattle dress' presented to Parliament in 1955 was painted by William Dargie in London. The painting was commissioned by Jim Beveridge to celebrate the Queen's visit in 1954, but he died before the painting was completed and returned to Australia.

Playford accurately gauged public reaction to Bradman's knighthood, but he never imagined that it would be so enthusiastic

Beveridge passed the information on to Menzies, who personally acknowledged receipt on 24 November 1950.

In May 1951 the Reverend David Broughton of Sale, in Victoria also wrote to Prime Minister Menzies:

Peter Dawson has delighted millions during a long and tireless life. He is a true son of Australia. A native troubadour if ever there were one. We honour cricketers and others of less account than they. Might it not help to dispel the creeping cynicism in the matter of 'honours' if we could have Sir Peter?

and in reply:

Mr Menzies has asked me to tell you that the views expressed by you have been recorded and will be borne in mind ...

in fact, a scribbled note indicates that the Staton/Beveridge file was revisited by Menzies on 19 June, and that Jim Beveridge immediately passed on 'the details which you requested regarding our mutual friend':

I am sure that if Peter is knighted the bestowal of this Honour would have universal approval, not only in Australia, but all over the English-speaking world.

The letter suggests that there was some agreement between the two men, but, though not the last suggestion, that appears to be the closest to a decision in Peter Dawson's favour.

Mr A. O. Robson of Chatswood, recommended a knighthood on 6 December, 1951 and again on 14 February, 1953 after he had been the 'Acting Federal Supervisor of Religious Broadcasts for the ABC'. On 26 November, 1953, the Chairman of the Australian Songwriters' and Composers' Association recommended their then President for a knighthood:

we are most anxious that this honourable and respected gentleman be awarded some suitable distinction during his life-time ... Peter Dawson always has been and still is our most prominent Australian ambassador in the musical field and as you well know, he is of world acclaim. ... He is a man who could carry a Knighthood with great charm and dignity.

The last entry in the file, 3 March, 1958, is a recommendation from the Official Secretary to the Governor-General to Sir Allen Brown, Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department following representations from 'a group of people in Sydney':

I am enclosing some biographical notes and would like to suggest for your consideration that he be recommended for an O.B.E. in the next List. I am sure that such an award would be wildly acclaimed.

Not as wildly acclaimed as a knighthood; in fact, having ignored the man

for so long it would have been a pitiful reward. There is no explanation for the failure of all these recommendations. In theory, Peter Dawson knew nothing of these attempts, but the biographies supplied by his close friends suggest that they had consulted him for at least some of the information. Peter Dawson had every right to believe that the Australian government would treat him as one of its honoured sons:⁶⁸

I saw the Prime Minister [John Curtin] get up from his seat [in Parliament] and make his way across the floor of the House to where I was sitting. With extended hand he said: "I am very glad to welcome you to this House, Mr. Dawson. I extend the welcome on behalf of my colleagues as well. I should like to thank you for all the good work you are doing on behalf of your country."

he was accustomed to accolades; he was constantly coupled with Nellie Melba as one of Australia's greatest musical ambassadors.⁶⁹

Dame Mary Gilmour wrote to Peter Dawson in 1950 saying " ... indeed you are a wonder. After half a lifetime you still sing - out of your heart - as a bird sings - and the words of your songs still matter to you. Australia had Melba, Malcolm McEachern and it has you - and you three have carried the name of Australia everywhere. But while you have gone everywhere the two others went, you have gone into the hearts they never reached."

Small wonder then that he felt neglected in his final years;⁷⁰ small wonder that his pen became acerbic.

During the 'fifties he had received many gossip letters from an English friend, James Tierney, but did not respond to them until 1961, when he answered them collectively by highlighting a number of salient stories.⁷¹ In one, commenting on the destructive effect of public opinion, Tierney⁷² had made a passing reference to Florence Austral,⁷³ who received this mention in Peter Dawson's book:⁷⁴

I had often toured with Florence Austral and her husband Amadio, the flautist. She certainly possessed a grand voice, but I must confess that I was astonished at her success following the *Daily Mail's* remarkable write-up. Nevertheless, she deserved her triumph.

He then describes her as 'a very 'large' woman' and proceeds to tell a yarn on this theme. In his late response to Tierney he recall that:

⁶⁸Dawson, 1951, 216. In ABC chapter Peter Dawson has appealed to Curtin to interfere on his behalf. In his book he does not mention Menzies or Moses.

⁶⁹newspaper, *The Bulletin*, 1982, 03.30, *A Tribute to Peter Dawson* [for his Centenary]

⁷⁰Dawson, 1961, 03.10 - explaining the reason for his move to Adelaide in his latter years to Jim Tierney: 'The Ad'de debacles:-Fed up with inconsistent people including A.B.C. & Chappell & Co & Etc felt I was being by-passed'

⁷¹Dawson, 1961, 03.10

⁷²Tierney, 1957, 10.17

⁷³Shawe-Taylor 1980: 'Florence Austral' (Fawaz, Wilson) 1894-1968 in *New Grove*.

⁷⁴Dawson, 1951, 191

Florence Austral was banned from all big musical Festivals especially Worcester on account of Divorce & her assoc with John Amadio fautist [sic] who deserted his wife and kiddies. Her mother Mrs Fauetz died of a broken heart.

Tierney had reported an inane story told by Peter Dawson's last English agent, Harold Fielding.⁷⁵ The old raconteur took umbrage.⁷⁶

Damned idiotic nonsense anent my careless packing of my own bag for a concert. Fielding was a funny pedantic fop - too much money of Mothers.

Fielding was not the only one to enjoy his frustration. When Gerald Moore toured Australia in 1953 with the German lieder singer, Irmgard Seefried, Peter Dawson made contact with him:⁷⁷ 'Bill Pete & I, Frank & Maddie Halls went to hear & see Gerald Moore at the (Recital) Conservatorium', which Gerald Moore recalls:⁷⁸

My last sight of him was in Sydney ... We spent several evenings together when I was free and he always turned up like the good friend he was at my lectures in Sydney. By this time he had lost his first wife Nanny to whom he was devoted and he had retired from the public platform. He had a new wife, Conny (Nanny's sister) and she brought him much comfort and care in the evening of his days.

I spent the evening prior to my departure at dinner in his house and we laughed and chatted over old days. He came to the airport with his friend Harold Williams (also a fine baritone) to see me off. My final glimpse of him was his cheery face as he waved me goodbye.

In 1958⁷⁹ Jim Tierney told Peter Dawson that:

on Sunday morning, Gerald Moore gave a short talk about his being an accompanist, how he started etc, and mentioned that world famous baritone Peter Dawson taking him to HMV to record for the first time.

which could be expected to have flattered the old maestro, but the 1961 response was:

Gerald Moore left me like a shag on a rock for bigger fish & not until recent years did he even mention my name. a pinch-penny pianist if ever there was such an one? He was 62 last Dec. He married his cousin, the daughter of a Norwood grocer. His first wife was a beaut Yank ~~capable of every~~ knew all the answers

Though it is possible to understand his latter-day frustration and share his disappointment at the neglect by those who allocate public honours, it does not reduce his stature, for no-one doubted that Peter Dawson was one of the most outstanding Australians of his generation.

⁷⁵Tierney, 1959, 02.23

⁷⁶Dawson, 1961, 03.10

⁷⁷Dawson, Constance, diary, 1953, 01.31.

⁷⁸Moore, Gerald, hw, c.1961 to Ron Hughes, PDAS

⁷⁹Tierney, J. 1958, 02.17

This study set out to question the popular myth: that 'Peter Dawson is arguably the most famous Australian male singer', that 'for several generations Peter Dawson was a by-word. Peter Dawson was as much a folk-hero as Donald Bradman or Kingsford-Smith. He was, quite literally, a household name throughout Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and much of the British Empire for five decades' due to 'his singular success and longevity in a new medium: recording. His success as a recording star - from primitive wax cylinders into the age of stereo recordings - ensured his popularity for fifty years.'

By detailing his actual achievement the first conclusion is that the myth has a basis in fact, for he was unquestionably famous. More importantly, the investigation proves that his actual professional achievement far outweighed the limiting recording notoriety. He was equally at home in radio and finally television; he had a monumental concert and touring career, and finally the highlighting of his compositional skills adds another related dimension neglected by the myth.

The investigation shows him to be a model of a Victorian/Edwardian artist, who grew with the new electronic entertainment industry without relinquishing his hold on the touring practices of the past. He is seen as a model of the impact of American advertising on Great Britain. The new boldness startled England at the turn of the century, but thanks to his friendly, malleable nature and innate musicianship Peter Dawson grew with the industry from its primitive beginnings. The recording industry deliberately made him famous; he utilised that fame in his other activities and was held prisoner by that fame, for he felt compelled to promote the image of perennial success even when it had become little more than fiction.

In fact, there is a bold curve in the parabola of his life. The investigation argues that it peaked in 1931, peaked surprisingly at the height of the Depression. By 1939 recording contracts had almost petered out (no pun intended); wartime assessments by ABC management show that it believed he was past his prime. His career could have been finished by 1939, after 35 years. The longevity in the myth was only made possible by the minimal post-war recording contracts, the post-war English nostalgia tours and the retrospective broadcast series for both the BBC and ABC.

His success and longevity parallels the hold of imperialism on Australia. Peter Dawson had never had to question the values he had known as a child. Australia became a nation and with it the gradual recognition that the larrikan characteristics grown out of egalitarianism set Australians apart from their counterparts in Great Britain and the Empire. World War I appears to have been the turning point in the acceptance of this national identity. But the values of Empire never changed. These values survived at all levels. The cord that tied Australia to Britain remained secure until at least after World War 2:⁸⁰

Australian leaders were generally content to allow Great Britain to make decisions for Australia as we basically agreed with her policies. In fact it was not until 1923 that S.M. Bruce appointed a permanent liaison officer, a

⁸⁰Henderson, P., *Parliament & Politics*, Heineman, 1989, 356; 366

modern-day ambassador, to London. Until 1940, when Ambassadors were sent to China, Japan and the USA, Australia had no officials permanently stationed overseas other than in London.

Australia's relations with Britain changed significantly between 1939 and 1945 because Australia felt she had been neglected by Britain; either through Britain's inability or unwillingness to defend her in the Pacific the Labour Government was forced to turn to the USA for help. Though Menzies revived this adulation of the Crown after the War and the seeds of change were sown.

But the values of Empire, and with it imperial culture, never changed for that substantial conservative element which had its voice in Peter Dawson. It has been argued that his survival, even as 'a niche industry' demonstrated the blind adherence of Australians to those values. It has been demonstrated that his repertoire, despite its size and proven depth and quality, remained essentially static. As he could sing *O ruddier than the cherry* in a 1900 Adelaide concert and still sing it at a 1951 ABC concert in Fremantle, that similar material, which dominated the repertoire he used - common among basses and baritones - could be found in re-published versions of albums dating from the mid-nineteenth century, is significant reflection of the static nature of repertoire acceptable to a particular strand of society. It has been argued that this repertoire, despite changes in the saccharine quality of its Victorian drawing-room sentiment, had a basic unity which was founded in the romantically reformed music of the church and the tastes of the middle class society which had grown out of industrial Victorian England, had grown out of a society secure in the strength and power of Empire, which could admit no diminution of that power.

It is hoped that by challenging the myth through the identification of facts, through the cumulative effect of seemingly pedantic corrections of detail, this study will impact on the myth for it reveals more of the substance of the man and many factors that moulded him and his society. Those who no longer remember Peter Dawson may be reminded that he was symbolic for the society which they have inherited, a society still to emerge from its isolation and its unquestioning acceptance of the infallibility of the British Empire and the Crown.

Appendix 1

L. A. G. Strong¹ review of Dawson. 1951, *Fifty Years of Song*

London newspaper 1951, 10.04:

[Those who] know him only as a singer who can top the bill at the Palladium will be surprised at the *Lieder* programme which he chose for his first recital at the Wigmore Hall.

Mr Dawson does not like conductors and keeps a stern eye on accompanists. Among his other dislikes are crooners and the kind of people who used to shine in the Indian Civil Service. His travels have taken him into strange places, in which the catapult which he always carries has sometimes come in handy.

His memory is not always accurate, and it is a pity he did not get someone to read the proofs. The row he describes on page 138 took place between McCormack and Kirkby Lunn, not Melba, who was an amused spectator. The three of them, with Sammarco, had come to record the quartette from *Rigoletto*, and, after the quarrel, Edna Thornton was hurriedly sent for to take Kirkby Lunn's place, *The Low Back'd Car* is misquoted, Molly Brannigan called out of her name, Albert Coates, after some spirited appearances in his own right, stands in for the tenor John (Coates): "The Calf of Gold" aria from *Faust* becomes "The Cloth of Gold": Alfred O'Shea, Somervell, Eddie McGoorty, Sammaco, Toscanini, Foli, Maurice D'Oisly, Fritz Brase are all misspelt. But these are trivial flaws in a lively, interesting, often valuable book, the life-story of a fine singer and a warm-hearted, fearless, and likeable man.

L. A. G. Strong.

¹L. A. G. Strong was an important music critic and broadcaster during Peter Dawson's lifetime. Tierney, 1957, 10.00: 'LAG Strong is giving a half hour programme about you next Friday afternoon at 4'

Appendix 2

Anecdotes a sample

Peter Dawson had a reputation as a raconteur. His book, his interviews and the recollections of others are peppered with his anecdotes. The stories were considered irrelevant to the main thrust of the documentation but the following examples may serve as an indication of his sense of humour.

anecdotes which feature the clothes he wore in the early days:

Dawson, 1951, 17:

One of the first things I did was carry out my father's advice and buy a complete outfit ... tail coat, striped trousers and waist-coat. The coat was braided. With this I wore a shining silk top hat with a pair of tan shoes. In this fashion I called on Mr. Charles Santley ... The first song I sang for Santley was "O ruddier than the Cherry", from Handel's *Acis and Galatea*.

London newspaper, 1939, 10.31:

Silk Hat, Brown Boots ...in Australia, announces retirement ... He has also told that when he obtained an introduction to Charles Santley he called on him in morning suit, silk hat - and brown boots!

EMI, 1931, 04.00:

I bought a tall hat and frock coat, and clad in these - and brown boots - went off to see Charles Santley, who looked me up and down - I could see a twinkle in his eye - and he heard me sing. I remember I sang 'She alone charmeth my sadness'. He said 'You've got a very good voice, my boy, but you're a rough diamond, a very rough diamond', still he took me on.

newspaper, 1931, 03.20:

"A year or two later I came to England, a raw Australian, and took cheap rooms at Kennington. I bought a morning suit, a top hat, and brown boots. Dressed in these, I went off to see Sir Charles Santley¹. He played for me while I sang. He was a terrible pianist."

Brown boots with a tall hat or dark clothes, which appear in all the quotations, must have been particularly gauche; a red tie is substituted on another occasion in stories about *O ruddier than the Cherry*.

newspaper, 1931, 09.22: *His First Concert-Peter Dawson appears in tan boots:*

Peter Dawson told the Commonwealth Club some capital stories at a luncheon at the Town Hall yesterday (21.09.31). One was about his first solo in that hall ... "Well do I remember the first song I sang here. It was 'O ruddier than the cherry' and I stood there (pointing to the end of the platform), wearing what I thought was the shiniest pair of tan boots in the world. My old master, Mr. C. J. Stevens, saw them before I went on the

¹ not knighted until 1907

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platform and said "My boy, You can't wear those' 'Why can't I? What's wrong with them?' 'Black, they must be black.' 'Well, it's too late now. and anyway they go well with my song, at any rate.'

Glennon, 1968, 47:

... when he was engaged at the age of eighteen to sing a solo at an Adelaide Glee Club concert. As he stood off-stage, waiting to make his public debut as a soloist, someone frantically pointed to his tie. "Peter," the man said, "You can't go on in a dark suit and a red tie. For Pete's sake run home and change it. We'll change the items around." "I can't," Peter said, "I haven't a key." "Can't some of your family open the door for you?" "No," Peter grinned, "they're all out the front tonight." Relating the story with relish, Peter would add, "I went on and sang. Funny thing, the item I'd chosen was 'O Ruddier Than the Cherry.' "

Melba

Peter Dawson liked to take a crack at Melba. This story appears in his book and elsewhere. The 'tiny hand' story is well known as a standard operatic story. Sometimes the characters change but it is usually Caruso. Most PD biographers use this anecdote, eg Walsh, March 33, and it appeared in London, *News Chronicle*, 1955, 04.26, among others:

A HOT SAUSAGE, CARUSO AND MELBA

The millions strong unseen audience of television must have joined in the orchestra's ovation to the 73-year-old bass-baritone Peter Dawson last night. He sang "The Road To Mandalay" with all his old verve and humour and with wonderful voice control. Then his eyes twinkled like a naughty schoolboy as he told an outrageous story of Caruso pressing a hot sausage into Melba's palm as he sang "Your Tiny Hand Is Frozen."

studio and performance stories

Glennon, J., 1968, *Australian Music and Musicians*

Near the studios of the Gramophone Company at Hayes, Middlesex, where "His Master's Voice" records are made ... was a row of houses with fowl yards. The studio window opened directly on to them, and often a soft passage of music would be interrupted by a rooster obligato. So delicate were the modern recording microphones that the crowing recorded clearly. The company bought all the fowls to get rid of the nuisance. Then the householders began keeping dogs ... cheaper to block up the windows than embark on another pet buying crusade."

EMI, 1937, 8.00, *The Voice: Peter the Practical Joker*

... recording days at Hayes ... famous conductor perspired freely in warm recording studio ... changes of underwear in artists' room ... Peter found some rubber stamps ... pants profusely marked PASSED WEAR TEST and the vests TECHNICALLY REJECTED

Later, the conductor told him wife was so embarrassed washed them herself

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instead of sending to laundry.

Dawson, 1952, 129: The same story appears in attributed to Albert Coates:² 'when I saw Albert's underwear hanging on a line in the dressing room, well, my hands itched to 'have a go', and of course I did. Borrowing stencil plates from one of the men in the despatching department ...'

EMI, 1992, 07.16: The EMI Librarian reports that the following story is told: Because of the wax technique of early recording wax was cut off during recording. After a session the technician would collect the wax and press it flat again. Peter Dawson would record as many swear words as he could think of, then it would be played back so that all could have a good laugh.. Playing it back cut and destroyed the pressing and destroyed the evidence.

newspaper, 1961,10.16, *Woman's Day*, Gladys Moncrieff in *The Peter Dawson I Knew*:

Peter told the story of a visit to Italian singer Marchesi. Ushered into her huge, polished hall, he skidded on a rug and went flying. That was his entrance!

But its no good when I tell it. You have to hear it from Peter himself as he followed one anecdote with another.

There are so many stories about him. There's the famous one when he followed Chaliapin on a bill, using the great Russian's gestures and mannerisms, even singing like him. Chaliapin is said to have been a bit put out.

William James, same article:

He had a great sense of humour... during a spinning song he was providing the 'thrum thrum trum'. I was at the piano. At each 'thrum' he would knock me with his elbow ... and he made the pace so fast that the soprano threatened him after with 'if you ever do that again . . .

There were trips from town to town on midnight trains. On one long journey Peter Dawson opened his trunk revealing a quilt lettered with a hotel name. "They robbed me so I had to take something of theirs!" "It was a joke - there was never anything mean about Peter adds Mr James.

WW1 in London

newspaper, 1961, 10.16:

Mr Rhod. Welch of Palm Beach recalls the time he was a young soldier AIF during WWI on leave in London. He and some mates were eating at he famous 'Cheshire Cheese' when Peter Dawson spoke to them. He took them out for another meal, showed them around London, and signed his name in Mr Welch's notebook as 'Mr Dawson of Sydney'. 30 years passed before Mr. Welch realised the Mr Dawson was Peter, the celebrated singer. Meeting again they became friends.

²Albert Coates, composer, conductor of Wintergarden Orchestra on PD recordings

Appendix 2

an invitation card

personal

Peter & Nan Dawson
to a cocktail party
27.01.35
prior to their South African Tour

*We haven't enough chairs to seat
But plenty of stuff to eat
So come along chums
If no room for your elbows
There's plenty of room for your feet.*

newspaper, 1931, 10.01, interview in Perth [Nan's 1925 accident]:

Mrs Dawson does not sing now ... badly injured in motor accident in England five years ago. "It was bad luck, too, commented Mr Dawson, with a chuckle, because there were only three Georges - 'King George, Lloyd George, and Annette George.' "

Dawson, 1946c., hw:

'I've met men from almost all countries and they have all said how they were dragged to a concert to hear Peter Dawson sing. "And what do you think of him now?" - "better than then"!

Bennet, B. V., 1991, 05.01: great-niece's memories

In actual fact when Uncle Peter settled in Sydney his brother Will Dawson put him on his payroll as publicity officer to help finances. One funny story I heard as a teenager. Uncle Peter tried to brew his own whisky whilst living in Sydney. All the bottles 'blew' and I believe the whisky was running into the street.

yarns

newspaper, n.d., Peter Dawson talking about tours China & Japan

The odd things that have happened to me on these tours would fill a book. In South Africa I was billed as 'The King of Record Makers: Over Two Million Records.' I was told that a Zulu chief was very keen to meet me; but when he did he was terribly disappointed. Somehow or other he had got into his head that I had two million wives!

Dawson, 1946c., hw:

A New Guinea native was asked if he could get some cigarettes on the Black Market. No, Black Market here only, he answered, only White Market.

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biography, *Mikado*, State Theatre, 1939, c.06.00:

Staying for one night in the very foreign town of Karachi, he desired to convey to a native attendant his wish to be awakened at 6 a.m., and to facilitate an understanding, held up six fingers. Later six bottles of whisky appeared.

newspaper, 1951, 04.24 and newspaper, 1991, 08.23:

When he and Hambourg giving a recital in South Africa on a very hot evening, Hambourg left the stage sweating after one bracket. Peter Dawson remarked to a native stage-hand that 'playing piano was hard work' to which the stage-hand replied: "Yes boss but did you ever try to lift one!"

Peter Dawson singing in Tasmania c.1954: (as told to author):

The man responsible for taking the famous singer to lunch suggested the best hotel. As it was a beautiful day Peter Dawson suggested that, instead of going to a posh restaurant they should just buy a couple of pies and sit in the beautiful, peaceful St David's Park. Thus, the two well-dressed men sat on a park bench and ate their pies.

"And what was your impression of Peter Dawson?" I asked. Among a number of other descriptors the good man mentioned that Peter Dawson liked to 'tell a yarn that was dicey'. He illustrated this point with the following yarn which Peter Dawson thought appropriate to the occasion. A man was eating a pie on a park bench. A down-and-out comes along a begs for something to eat. The man on the bench throws him the rest of his partly eaten pie. The beggar picks it up, bites into, and exclaims: "Shit!", looks at the donor, then adds: "but mostly pie."

To L. Stanton Jeffries³ (Light Music BBC):

Orcades, Indian Ocean, 19.10.50

Dear Jeff, ... Poor Nan has had a bad fall and injured herself badly ... The weather is Hell with the lid off. The ladies are quite bare from the arse to the ground, but it is nice & refreshing even after my 50 years of song to see the dear things at play with tiny balls and coyly laughing and tittering. The latter game is played where there is least light & it is most uplifting for the deaf and short sighted. Cheers & Beers Your old Cobber Peter Dawson

³Stanton Jeffries, here a BBC official, was one of the Australians with Peter Dawson in the 1923 broadcast from Australia house, explained in Chapter 5

Appendix 3

smoking, drinking, gambling

Like 'Anecdotes' this aspect of his character has not been developed. It seemed sufficient to point out that he started life as a teetotaler and appeared to enjoy a whisky in later years. There seemed no reason to focus on gambling either as it was not a reported vice, but, as it is said that an Australian will bet on two flies crawling up a wall, it is not surprising to find references to playing poker, buying a ticket in a Lottery or going to the races, especially as there were many long and tedious journeys with time on his hands.

Dawson, 1946c., hw: [1906 smoking]

in 1906 in the Channel Islands I bought Coronas at 7^d apiece against 2/6 to 3/- London price. Tom stubbed it out when he heard price.

Tierney, 1957, 10.17: tobacco c1906

20 Players today costs 4/- and they are not half as good as the 12 Tierney's "Home Made" Hand made Virginia sold over 60 years ago at 12 for 2^{1/2}^d.

Do you remember those delightful Tierney's "Silk Cut" at 8^d an ounce, about 24 to the ounce. They were hand made. I've swigged many a pint at 5^d ...

Walsh, 1962, April, 34, [1909 tour]:

'When the party went to Melbourne (after first in Adelaide) P success became greater with each concert. He knew he was in exceptionally good voice and attributed that to **not smoking or drinking** but later decided the climate was the contributing factor' though records made in England were better than those made in Australia.

newspaper, Daily Express, 1924, 12.17:

photo of Peter Dawson advertising cigarettes, smoking SARONYS

Scott, M.1979, 180-182, *The Record of Singing, Baritones & Basses*

No. 132: photo of Peter Dawson 1930 (photo same clothes as 1931 programme, cigarette in hand, but wearing trilby)

advertisement, 1931, Melbourne Programmes 1&2:

Programme has a contemporary photo of PD in tie and wing collar with cigarette in hand.

Peter Dawson interview with G.W.S.Meadmore, Sept 1935:

'sometimes Santley would invite me to dinner. After dinner we would smoke fierce black Spanish cigars but I could smoke anything I those days. Later Dawson smoked little, if at all, and in the matter of alcohol was virtually a teetotaler.

Appendix 3

photograph, EMI, 1936, 08.10 1935, South African tour

Peter Dawson wearing a hat, holding a cigarette. Signed: Yours sincerely,
Peter Dawson Aug 10th 1936; and under: Best wishes to R.S.Woodstock

newspaper, 1951, 04.25:

after a bronchitis attack during the second world war years his doctor order him to give up - and felt the better for it.

7 November 1955: Stopped Smoking

Tierney, 1957, 04.10:

'have been along to Smith's Tobacco Shop and got you a quarter of snuff which our dispatch man is sending in today. I phoned Australia House to know if it was dutiable and they said you might have to pay a little: still you'll get the snuff and that's the main point.'

newspaper, 1951, 05.24

Peter, too, in the days when he was trying to be a man before he had grown out of being a boy, adopted the black twist tobacco ('the black, rank twist favoured by seamen' which his father smoked) and developed a pair of lungs that could enjoy it. As soon as he was married, however, his wife very firmly cured him of it, though he continued to smoke milder leaf "like a chimney". Only 10 years ago, when he had an attack of bronchitis, his doctor told him that he would have further attacks until he gave up smoking. He has not tasted tobacco since, feels better for it, and thinks that good though his voice was it might have been even better had he done without that luxury earlier. "I had a cough all the time," he explains. Then if a visitor barks a little he adds, brightly, "Just like that, it was."

He enjoys a drink whenever he feels like it, and does not think that fine Scotch whisky has done him anything but good.

biography (interview with nephews) 1993, 03.25

- Will & Tom were can makers - Uncle Peter called Will 'money bags' - Will very straight. Uncle Peter was not a big drinker; he could not drink

Dawson, 1951, 50 [1909 tour]:

A week or so after the Melbourne concert we were travelling between Melbourne and Newcastle, and a game of poker started. The party consisted of John Tait¹, myself and three others ... when the game ended and the score was added up, I had won £3 ... We met many times after that on railway trains, but we never had another game of poker. However, he could not ... resist the old challenge, "John, I'll toss you for two shaves." ... we tossed many times.

¹1909 tour, entrepreneured by the Tait brothers.

Appendix 3

Dawson, 1929, 06.05:

'Dear Javal, I hope between your labours you managed to back the winner - I had the odd spot on the 3rd so did quite well.'

London newspaper, 1931, c.11.00:

"On our return voyage to England my wife and I between us won the daily sweep on the ship's run 56 times. That was an unusual series of successes, and because we sat at the captain's table our fellow passengers hinted at collusion."

Dawson, 1946c., hw: mentions playing 'Two up' and post-war 'shops groaning with all the commodities. Money by the bag. Don't know what to do with it - other than throw it away on gambling, - bon chance.'

1957 Bank pay-in slips show two Lottery prizes: 27th May 1957 £9.19.9, 3rd July 1957 £4.18.9

Appendix 4

painting

Though not considered important to the main thrust of the argument, painting appears to have been a favoured hobby. Among his papers there are many sketches and cartoons which serve to illustrate his wicked sense of humour but there are also serious water-colours, which show his affinity with painting.

One, signed: *Peter Dawson 1903* is a - watercolour, the subject: head and shoulders of a well-dressed woman against a heavy blue background.¹

Another, also signed *P. Dawson* is a watercolour "Holy Isle" (in Scotland).²

On the reverse is a pencil note: *c 1903*, but whether from Peter Dawson or the Centenary celebration is not clear.

The bulk of the collection is sketches, of which a cartoon of Sir Malcolm Sargent by "Lissenden" may serve as a sample.³ It is a caricature in ink of the great conductor, presumably around 1930 when they were working together. The finished caricature includes the signature *Lissenden* but on the reverse Peter Dawson has signed *Peter Dawson* and *Liar PD*

suggesting that 'Lissenden' is yet another pseudonym.

The entries in *Who's Who in Australia* [1933 and 1959] end with 'recreations: painting, gardening'.

¹MS5030/6/9

²MS5030/6/8

³MS5030/6/3

Appendix 5

Mendelssohn, Gounod, Handel

A further explanation of the background to the role this music played in English musical culture at the end of the nineteenth century.¹

The assertion in Chapter 2 that:

Steven's productions of *Redemption* and regular performances of *Messiah* were the product of the original concept of the importation of English culture for he had 'been a member of the Chapel Royal Choir' and, significantly, 'had worked with both Mendelssohn and Gounod in the preparation of their works'. From which it would also follow that he would promote performances of *Elijah*, which Mendelssohn had composed for English choral festivals

may deserve further explanation. It goes without saying that Stevens was an English musician and would therefore be the product of and empathetic to the reigning musical influences of the period. Throughout England there were great choral festivals, for which 'many Catholic composers of oratorio (Gounod, Dvorak, Elgar) wrote some of their finest works in this genre'². 'The Romantic oratorio flourished chiefly in the Protestant countries of England and Germany'. 'Gounod's *Redemption* (1882) was written for festival performance in Birmingham'. The 'main strength of nineteenth century oratorio lay in the choruses and in this respect its descent from Handel is obvious'³.

Mendelssohn's 'last major composition, the oratorio *Elijah*, was produced in 1846 at the Birmingham Festival and "touched off the emotional spring of Victorian religious respectability as no other work had done" '⁴

During the nineteenth century Mendelssohn's choral works were ranked above his instrumental compositions. Among his large oratorios, *St. Paul* (1836) derives from Handelian dramatic oratorio, with some movements drawing on Bach's four-part chorale style. *Elijah* (1846) is a more felicitous fusion of these elements with the oratorio style of Spohr and the English anthem, its influence evident in the motet-like choruses.

There follows some pluses and minuses and then the conclusion:

despite all its shortcomings, *Elijah* is one of the finest large choral works of the nineteenth century and for a long time was considered inferior only to Handel's *Messiah*'.⁵

A more extensive and perspicacious appraisal of the works and the time may be found in Harman & Mellers which follows their criticism of

¹from: Harman, A. and Mellers, W., 1962, *Man and his Music*, London, Barrie; Longyear, R. M., 1973, *Nineteenth Century Romanticism in Music*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall; Grout, D. J., 1980, *History of Western Music*, London Dent; Machlis, J., 1984, *The Enjoyment of Music*, New York, Norton

² Longyear, 55

³ Grout, 570

⁴ Machlis, 90

⁵Longyear, 116

Appendix 5

Mendelssohn's failure to benefit from a study of Bachian counterpoint. However, in reading the passage it should not be forgotten that Mendelssohn was a public idol.⁶ Harman & Mellors assessment⁷ may be objective but it obscures the power and influence of Mendelssohn not only in England but in his native Germany and beyond:

Mendelssohn betrays no interest in, let alone knowledge of, religious experience. His attempt when he settled in England, to create a nineteenth-century version of Handelian oratorio and Bachian cantata was doomed to failure. The English still sang Handel; but the zest of the Chosen People in an age of mercantile expansion was by now wearing shoddy; and there had never been an organic connexion between the spiritual implications of Handelian oratorio and those of the Bach passion. There are moments of genuine and powerful dramatic feeling in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; but one has to admit that his harmonic mannerisms ... are much more obvious in his religious than in his secular instrumental music: and that the weak periodicity of his phrases, with their limp feminine endings, is more damaging in music which aims at drama and monumental grandeur.

During his visits to London, Gounod was greatly impressed by Mendelssohn's pseudo-oratorios. To us, perhaps, Gounod's sweetness seems preferable to Mendelssohn's solemnity; we can take a little Tennysonian honey, so long as we are not simultaneously bullied with a pietistic morality that seems to us irrelevant. It is significant that Mendelssohn should have reached the pinnacle of his fame in a rapidly and recently industrialised England. Our native musical tradition being moribund, we were the more prepared to accept a consciously archaistic style: and to welcome in musical convention a spurious religiosity which reflected the element of unconscious humbug in our morality and beliefs.

George Bernard Shaw⁸ hit the nail on the head with characteristic trenchancy:

was ready to serve up the chopping to pieces of the prophets of the grove with his richest musical spice to suit the compound of sanctimonious cruelty and base materialism which his patrons, the British Pharisees, called their religion

Was Shaw going a little too far when he said:

Set all that dreary fugue manufacture, with its Sunday School sentimentalities and music school ornamentalities, against the expressive and vigorous choruses of Handel and ask yourself on your honour whether there is the slightest difference in kind between Stone him to Death and Under the Pump with a Kick and Thump from Dorothy.

Shaw was nonetheless making a valid and important point. In an industrial society the values of art were becoming indistinguishable from those of commerce.'

⁶Smith, 1989, diss., *Lortzing's Der Wildschütz*

⁷Harman 833-4

⁸GBS on Music, 1962

Appendix 6

argument: that the Albani tour was in 1903

The inclusion of the tour with the famous Madame Albani, features in most biographies, for example, EMI, 1926, *The Voice*: Vol 10, No.2, February 1926, 12-13:

three years of hard work followed ... tour the West of England with Madame Albani's Concert Party

similarly in the *Daily Express*, London, 1931, 03.20 report on Peter Dawson's 25th Anniversary luncheon at the Savoy luncheon.

When news of Peter Dawson's first 'retirement' was reported London: Evening News, 1939, 10.31:

he studied three years with Santley, and then joined Madame Albani on a West of England tour. It gave him his first taste of popularity.

London, *Recorder*, 1951, 10.06, in its review of Peter Dawson's autobiography:

Peter Dawson's first professional fee for singing was 7s.6d. for an appearance at a church concert in the East End of London. Then he went on tour with Mme. Albani and made a triumph at their first concert in Plymouth. He was so good that the great Albani came out from the wings with tears in her eyes and embraced him.

and the James Glennon 1968, biography in *Australian Music and Musicians* makes a similar comment.

1000 *Famous Australians*, 1978, *Peter Dawson*:

in 1904 he toured west England with Madame Albani

and Brisbane (Ed), *Entertaining Australia*, 1991, 157:

after studying with Charles Santley he built his career as a concert artist, singing at the Crystal Palace and in promenade concerts, and touring with Emma Albani.

similarly *The Daily Telegraph Mirror*, 1991, 08.23: in *The enduring Peter Dawson*:

through Santley engaged as soloists for Sir Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Promenade concerts and in 1904 went on a tour of the west of England with Madame Albani's concert party.

It reveals that at the turn of the century it was a common practice for famous singers to tour, supported by other artists of varying standard. Touring with comparable concert parties played a large part in Peter Dawson's later life.

Appendix 6

There is an assumption that the name, Albani, still has an aura.¹ Who was she?

Albani, Emma (Dame) Montreal 1847 - London 1930

French Canadian, born Lajeunoux, adopted name from old Italian family. Studied Paris 1868, Milan. Debut Messina 1870. 1872 London debut. The beautiful qualities of her voice and the charm of her appearance were at once appreciated. Last and greatest triumph Isolda Covent Garden with de Reskes 1896. For many years great favourite at Handel and provincial festivals. Sang many new works. Her voice was a rich soprano of remarkably sympathetic quality. The higher registers were of exceptional beauty and she had perfected the art of *mezza voce*. Farewell performance 1911. Dame 1925.

George Bernard Shaw saw her in *Otello* at Covent Garden in 1851:²

There is less to be said about the other principals. It is no compliment to Albani to declare that she was better than Madame Cattaneo, as she could have hardly been worse. Like De Reszke, she redeemed herself in the latter half of the opera. Her intonation improved; and her acting had the sincerity which so honourably distinguishes her from her rivals

The mention of the tour is intended to indicate the precociousness of the new arrival. This tour as a minor supporting artist with the famous Madame Albani and his new teacher, Santley - who had obviously recommended his student to fill out the programme - is generally recorded as 1904. Vose, who quotes extensively directly from Dawson's autobiography, uses the 1904 date and supports his information with quotations from *The Gentlemen's Journal* of 1905, which was already acknowledging Peter Dawson, whose first recordings were then appearing, as a singer of the future:³

Mr. Dawson, during the autumn of 1903 toured with Madame Albani ... an instance of his success is afforded by The Western Daily Mercury of December 7th 1903, which said 'Mr. Dawson, the young Adelaide basso, appears to have scored a complete success at his first concert with Madame Albani, which took place at the Plymouth Guildhall on October 22

Among Dawson's documents⁴ is a photograph of Madame Albani dated *London, 1903*. While Dawson could have acquired it later it suggests that he received it from her that year and supports the proposition that the tour was in 1903. A 1903 tour for the 21-year old is an indication that he had a natural talent for he had just begun studying with Santley, and had only been studying singing for little more than three years altogether, a short time in the development of a professional technique.

¹*The New Grove*, 1980, Vol.1, 196, salient points

²*GBS on Music*, 1962: *Otello* 22nd July 1891

³Vose, 1987, 16

⁴NFSA, MS5030

Appendix 7

Gaisberg Retirement Dinner

scanned from

Moore, J.: *A Matter of Records*, 1977

Chapter Twenty-two

WHEN FRED GAISBERG'S retirement was announced, the entire gramophone industry stood to attention. To do him honour—though he deplored it—a banquet was planned at the Savoy Hotel for 21 April, 1939. Those who lent their names to form an Honorary Committee for the event made a virtual encyclopedia of the world of music that Fred Gaisberg had helped to create:

Sir Hugh Allen	Sacha Guitry	Ignaz Paderewski
Wilhelm Backhaus	Richard Haigh	Egon Petri
John Barbirolli	Mark Hambourg	Yvonne Printemps
Sir Thomas Beecham	Jascha Heifetz	Sergei Rachmaninoff
Sir Adrian Boult	Myra Hess	Elisabeth Rethberg
Adolf Busch	Harold Holt	Artur Rubinstein
Fritz Busch	Edward Johnson	Tito Schipa
Pablo Casals	Serge Koussevitzky	Elisabeth Schumann
John Christie	Fritz Kreisler	Rudolf Serkin
Albert Coates	A. T. Lack	L. G. Sharpe
Alfred Cortot	Wanda Landowska	Artur Schnabel
Richard Crooks	Sir Harry Lauder	Malcolm Sargent
Ben Davies	Lotte Lehmann	Herbert Sinclair
Peter Dawson	Frida Leider	Christopher Stone
Ania Dorfmann	Compton Mackenzie	Leopold Stokowski
Edwin Fischer	Sir Robert Mayer	Georg Szell
Kirsten Flagstad	Giovanni Martinelli	Luisa Tetrazzini
Sir George	Jan Masaryk	Lawrence Tibbett
Franckenstein	Lauritz Melchior	John Tillett
Elena Gerhardt	Count John McCormack	Bruno Walter
Walter Gieseking	Yehudi Menuhin	Felix Weingartner
Beniamino Gigli	Ivor Novello	Vaughan Williams
Eugene Goossens		Sir Henry J. Wood
James Gray		

[The Committee also included both the Chairman and the Managing Director of E.M.I., Alfred Clark and Louis Sterling.]

Appendix 8.1

Gramophone Company Contract Summary and Conversion

1904	first recordings with The Gramophone Company
1907	contract 24.4.07 - 23.4.10 (forerunner of later formal contacts)
1910	contract 25.4.10 - 24.4.13 'and for so long thereafter as may be mutually agreed'
1911	contract 24.5.11- 23.5.14 (value of contract increased)
1912	contract 16.11.12 - 15.5.14 (value of contract increased)
1914	contract 8.4.14 - 7.4.16
1919	contract 1.12.19 - 30.11.20
1921	contract 9.9.21 - 8.9.24
1924	contract 9.9.24 - 8.9.25
1925	contract 9.9.25 - 8.9.30 Royalties begin
1930	contract 9.9.30 - 8.9.33
1933	contract 9.9.33 - 8.9.35 guarantee reduced
1935	contract 9.9.35 - 8.9.37 as 1933
1938	contract 27.1.38 - 26.1.39 not less than 20 titles
1939	contract 12.4.39 - 11.4.40 not less than 12 titles
1947	contract 15.9.47 - 14.9.48 not less than 6 record-sides
1950, 04.03	contract two named titles <i>The Cry of the Wild Goose; That Lucky Old Sun</i>
1955, 04.07	contract 2 titles <i>Clancy of the Overflow; Mandalay Scena</i>

Earnings as per contracts

£ sterling		changes only noted		
<u>period</u>	<u>retainer</u>	<u>bonus</u>	<u>earnings</u>	<u>total p.a.</u>
1907	100		100	200
1910	100		100	200
1911	100		200	300
1912 ¹	200	100	300	600
1914	250		400	650
1919	300		900	1200
1925 ²		800	1000	1800
1930	1000		2500	3500
1933			1250	1250
1935	1500		1000	1250
1938				500
1939				300
1947			6 record sides	royalties only
1950			2 titles	royalties only
1955			2 titles	royalties only

¹ £100 for 1¹/₂ years; ² actually a once off bonus of £4000, averaged here over five years as ruled by later Taxation Department judgement.

Appendix 8.1

£ STERLING since 1904 to \$A1996

conversion table based on an average inflation rate of 4% pa¹

converted to \$A at current exchange rate 1: 2.44

formula: $1904 = 92 \times (1.04)^{92} = £36.902. \text{ £} \times 2.44 = \A

year	years to 1996	PD age	£1 x	\$A x	EMI contracts	1996 £1	1996 \$A
1996	00	----					
1961	35	79	03.946	09.628			
1955	41	73	04.993	12.183			
1950	46	68	06.075	14.823			
1947	49	65	06.833	16.673			
1945	51	63	07.391	18.034			
1939	57	57	09.352	22.819	300	2805	6845
1938	58	55			500		
1935	61	53	10.940	26.694	1250	13675	33370
1933	63	51	11.833	28.873	1250	14800	36090
1930	66	48	13.311	32.479	3500	46590	113675
1927	69	45	14.973	36.534			
1925	71	43	16.195	39.516	1800	29151	71130
1924	72	42	16.842	41.094			
1921	75	39	18.945	46.226	1200	22734	55470
1920	76	38	19.703	48.075			
1919	77	37	20.941	51.096	1200	25130	61315
1914	82	32	24.931	60.832	650	16200	39540
1912	84	30	26.965	65.795	600	16180	39480
1911		29			300	8090	19740
1910	86	28	29.165	71.163	200	5830	14230
1907	89	25	32.807	80.049	200	6560	16010
1904	92	22	36.902	90.041			

¹Source: Dean of Economics, University of Tasmania

some Gramophone Company artists contemporary with Peter Dawson:

EMI, c.1910:¹ *The Sound Waves and Talking Machine Record* republished in EMI *The Voice*, 1920² when the same group were recording some popular musicals with Byng again, in May, 1920.

Burgis, 1981 and EMI, 1985, 05.26, Matrix 2905741 M A, Matrix 2905741 M B:

A Southern Maid by Graham Fraser-Simpson with Peter Dawson, Nellie Walker, Bessie Jones, Ernest Pike, Edward Halland; chorus and orchestra conducted by George Byng at Hayes.

EMI, c.1910:

Principals of our Light Opera Company

The famous artists who have been making our Gilbert and Sullivan Records were able, during their visits, to listen to their own voices as recorded during the first stages of their new work.

reading from left to right they are:

Standing: Geo. W. Byng (Conductor) [listening to a gramophone], Derek Oldham, Walter Glynne, Ernest Pike, Edna Thornton, Peter Dawson, Edward Hallam, George Baker, Nellie Walker

Seated: Bessie Jones, Violet Essex, Sarah Jones, Harold Wilde³ and Robert Radford

Ron Hughes, (PDAS, 1992, 03.24), provides some information about some of the artists:

They were the finest singers of Dawson's day

Ernest Pike, tenor: Peter Dawson made many HMV & Zonophone records with Ernest Pike. Pike got literally blasted by the ultra snob, Melba.

George Baker, bass-baritone: Peter Dawson sang many times in small groups with Baker, but under different names. Baker equalled Dawson in the length of his recording career.⁴

Bessie Jones, soprano: PD recorded duets with Bessie.⁵

Sarah Jones, soprano: sister of Bessie

Harold Wilde, tenor: PD recorded at least one oratorio with Wilde.

Robert Radford, bass: became Director of English National Opera. Peter Dawson recorded oratorio with Radford, *The Lord is a Man of War*, etc

George Byng, Conductor: also composed *My Sword & I* sung by Peter Dawson

¹on same page text headed: *Brisk Business in Zonophones* mentions that Zonophone has added the Trademark *His Master's Voice* to its label. Zonophone had been taken over by the Gramophone Company 1904 but the trademark HMV was first used in 1909.

²possibly October because there is a reference to the September Supplement.

³was incorrectly: White

⁴x-ref newspaper, 1931, 11.18: George Baker, 25 years, 3000 records

⁵x-ref EMI, c.1985: *Peter Dawson on Stage*

Appendix 9

encores Sydney programme, 1933, 09.09

Peter Dawson, according to requests, will choose his encores from the following songs:-¹

1. O Ruddier than the Cherry (Handel)	19. Banjo Song (Homer)
2. Largo al Factotum (Rossini)	20. Who is Sylvia (Schubert)
3. The Glory of the Sea (Sanderson)	21. Erl King (Schubert)
4. Garden of Allah (Marshall)	22. Mandalay (Hedgecock)
5. Trumpeter (Dix)	23. I Travel the Road (Travers)
6. Shipmates of Mine (Squire)	24. Floral Dance (Moss)
7. Glorious Devon (German)	25. Bandolero (Stuart)
8. Cobblers Song (Chu Chin Chow)	26. Love Could I Only Tell Thee (Capel)
9. Song of the Highway (May)	27. There is a Green Hill (Gounoud)
10. Border Ballad (Cowen)	28. O Star of Eve (Wagner)
11. Chip of the Old Block (Squire)	29. Droop not young Lover (Handel)
12. Admiral's Yarn (Ruben)	30. Hear me, ye winds and waves (Handel)
13. Green Hills of Somerset (Coates)	31. Lake Isle of Innisfree Love ² (Travers)
14. If I Were King (Eyton)	32. An Old Garden (Herbert)
15. Kingfisher Blue (Finden)	33. The Kerry Dance (Molloy)
16. Lute Player (Allitson)	34. The Bonnie Earl o' Moray (Hope Temple)
17. Ole Man River ³ (Leoncavallo)	35. The Kerry Dance ⁴ (Molloy)
18. Santa Barbara (Russell)	36. The Bonny Earl o' Moray (Lawson)

⁵Boots; Shipmates; Cobbler's Song⁶; Drum Major; Rolling
Down to Rio; Kingfisher Blue; Danny Deever; Trumpeter;⁷
Trees.

¹reproduced as per programme - contains a number of errors indicating that not proof read, possibly not available at the last moment.

²omission

³Prologue omitted

⁴repeated (an error?)

⁵these latter not numbered and without composer.

⁶also above

⁷also above

motion pictures

1929

Correspondence exists in The Gramophone Company file dating from 5 June 1929¹ between Peter Dawson and 'Javal', which indicates (a) Peter Dawson's interest in a forthcoming production and (b) that he has another filming contract. From the limited information available it is not clear why this correspondence should be in the EMI file, unless 'Javal' was an EMI executive; in which case EMI must have had an interest in motion pictures at that stage.

Silent films had become popular but became redundant with the advent of sound about 1930.² As The Gramophone Company was at the cutting edge of sound technology the possibility that it knew about the application of sound to film in 1929 cannot be discounted.

On 27 July Peter Dawson wrote to Javal, who answered two days later:³

I have an offer to start on two films lasting about 10 weeks at Elstree for a firm who are renting space at B.I.P starting Aug 6th
I have excepted (sic) provisionally but as I understand you are starting at B.I.P's sometime in September, if by taking this offer will jeopardise any chance of my being able to join your firm, I shall cancel this offer.

1933 September. An Australian film?

1937

No permission exists in the file for a Boy Scout picture filmed around November, 1937. Peter Dawson acted a role and sang a song, which he had composed. ' "The Song of Salty Sam", dated November 1937, was Written & Composed by Rover Peter Dawson '⁴ for an 'Adventure story for boys':

**'CHIPS'
SEA SCOUT FILM**

A Feature Production by British Fine Art Pictures Limited

Scenario by Vivian Tidmarsh; Produced with the co-operation of the Boy Scouts

Association and the 3rd Poole Sea Scouts, and starring:

TONY WICKHAM, now appearing in "Housemaster" at the

Aldwych Theatre

DAVE BURNABY

Magistrate.

STANLEY HOLLOWAY

Harbour-Master.

CHRISTINE SILVER

Mother

MAJORIE SANDFORD

Comm[p]ere for Scouts Concert.

PETER DAWSON

The Old Salt.

PAMELA STANDISH

Lucile Simpson

Incorporating actual scenes of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole and R.R.S.
"Discovery".

¹EMI, 1929, 06.05, EMI, 1029, 07.27

²*Motion Pictures*, Encyclopaedia Britannica; *Cinema*, dtv Encyklopedea

³the answer is not in the Peter Dawson file; would require further EMI research.

⁴on an amended version the composer is J. P. McCall

Appendix 10

1937

At the beginning of 1937, as per his contract, Peter Dawson sought permission to take part in the motion picture, *O-Kay for Sound*, which was granted.⁵ The invitation must have come through his friends from the Palladium days for Gainsborough Film made a film of 'George Black's London Palladium success' with a bunch of famous comedians, Nervo & Cox, Flanagan & Allen, Naughten & Gold, known as The Crazy Gang.⁶

1939

In 1939, an article in *The Scout*⁷ by Edward Godal, Producer and Director'. announces that a shortened version is to be reissued. One photo is captioned: 'Peter Dawson ("Salty Sam") hands two Sea Scouts a clue leading to the discovery of the place where the smugglers imprisoned Chips.' and in the text: 'Peter Dawson - by the way, he really is a Rover Scout - has an important part in the film as Salty Sam, a local character. He also does a turn. He sings a roaring Sea Scout song - specially written for the film - and the boys were soon joining in the chorus.' A review appended: 'Peter Dawson sings a tuneful song pleasantly enough'

⁵EMI, 1937, 01.14

⁶advertisement, Vose, 1987, 122

⁷*The Scout*, 1939, 02.05,

Appendix 11

Greater Union Theatres 10th Anniversary of the State Theatre, Sydney.

The programme, 1939, 06.00, (not dated but c.7th June)¹ is centred around an English filmed version of *The Mikado* 'entirely in Technicolor'.

programme²

At the Wurlitzer Organ: Mr Manny Aarons

-

State News Review³

-

Overture "Gems from Gilbert & Sullivan"
Hamilton Webber and State Symphony Orchestra

-

Hunting Dogs - a Fox special⁴

-

Walt Disney cartoon "Farmyard Symphony"⁵

-

The Directors of Greater Union Theatres are proud to present

PETER DAWSON

The Eminent Australian Bass-Baritone

In a Programme specially selected from his extensive repertoire

At the piano: John Douglas Todd

-

Intermission

-

Entr'acte - "Conviviality"

Hamilton Webber and State Symphony Orchestra

-

THE MIKADO

¹letter Kenneth Neate, 1984, 06.14, tour information, and Brisbane, 1991

²(author's personal note): This mixture of live-show and film was quite common when I grew up in Melbourne 1942 - 1949. It was quite common to have an entertainment section between the first (B) film and the main feature. My younger brother and I often went to the matinee at the State Theatre in Flinders Street [one of the Greater Union Theatre chain]. My memory is of a large rounded theatre with a stage big enough to fit a large stage band with visiting artists. The Wurlitzer organ would rise from the depths with the organist playing. Of particular note was the ceiling: it was painted in such a way that one seemed to be looking up into the sky. There were stars and a void. I do not remember ever having seen it under bland electric light, so the effect always held its mystery for me.

³newsreel

⁴a short film; quasi documentary

⁵a famous cartoon in which Mickey Mouse, Claribel Cow, Horace Horsecollar and others cluck, bray (etc) the *William Tell Overture*

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MS5030/1/23
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title	composer	author	publisher	where	year/no.	package
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title	composer	author	publisher	where	year/no. package
Admiral's Yarn, The	Rubens, Paul A	Weatherley, F. E	Chappell	London	A
Ah, why recall in misery	Verdi, G.		PD mss		J
All night beneath the Moon	Dawson, Peter	Teschmacher, W	PD mss		O
An die Musik (a)	Schubert, F.	Oliphant (eng)	Augener	London	1362 G(ii)
An die Musik (b)	Schubert, F.				G(ii)
Anchored	Watson, Michael	Cowan, S. K	Aschenberg	London	JB2097 A
Annie Laurie (a) Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p72)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)			D
Annie Laurie (b)	Patterson, A. (ed)		PD mss		A
Ariel's Mockery	Bryan, Gordon	Shakespeare	PD mss		1926 K
Arrow, and the Song, The	Balfe, M.W.	Longfellow	PD mss		A
Asra, Der	Rubenstein	Heine	Augener	London	1878 G(ii)
At Evening Hour	Bach, J. S.		Novello	London	C
At Santa Barbara (a)	Russell, Kennedy	Weatherley, F. E.	Chappell	London	1912 K
At Santa Barbara (b)	Russell, Kennedy	Weatherley, F. E.	Chappell	London	1912 O
At Santa Barbara (c)	Russell, Kennedy	Weatherley, F. E.			K
attente, l'	Poldowski	Verlaine, P.	Rouart	Paris	D
Auf dem Flügel des Gesanges (On Wings of Song)	Mendelssohn, F.	Heine, England, P. (eng)			H4089 G(ii)
Auld House, The Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p101)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)			D
Aussian, The	McCall, J. P.	Davies, Leslie	PD mss		F
Aussie Spirit, The (a)	McCall, J. P.	Davies, Leslie	PD mss		F
"Aussie" Spirit, The (b)	Dawson, Peter	Davies, Leslie	Chappell	Sydney	1943 A
Austra-laise, The	Arlen, Albert	Dennis, C. J.	Chappell	Sydney	A
Australia (a)	Dawson, Peter	Baxter, Harry	PD mss		1940 O
Australia (b)	Dawson, Peter	Baxter, Harry			A

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Australia (c)	Besley/ McCall, J. P. (arr)	Baxter, Harry			C
Australian Bush Songs, Six: 1. Land of "Who Knows Where", The 2. Bush Silence 3. King Billy's Song 4. Comrades of Mine 5. Bush Night-Song 6. Stock-Rider's Song, The (entered under individual titles)	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922 K
Australian Christmas Carols, Five, (1st set): 1. Three Drovers, The 2. Silver Stars are in the Sky 3. Christmas Day 4. Carol of the Birds 5. Christmas Bush for his adorning	James, William	Wheeler, John	Chappell	Sydney	1948 D
Australian Christmas Carols, Five, (2nd set): 1. day that Christ was born, The 2. Christmas Night 3. little town where Christ was born, The 4. Sing Gloria 5. Noel-Time	James, William		Chappell	Sydney	D
Autolycus' Song	Greenhill, J.	Shakespeare			K
Away with philandering (a) (Non piu andrai)	Mozart, W. A.	da Ponte			H

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Away with philandering (b) (Non piu andrai)	Mozart, W. A.	da Ponte	as Conductor score			I
Away with philandering (c) (Non piu andrai)	Mozart, W. A.	da Ponte, Wheeler (eng)	Allan	Melbourne	1948	H
Bachelor Gay, A	Tate, Jas W.	Valentine, F. C.	Aschenberg	London	1918	B
Bandolero, The (a)	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Chappell	London	1894	B
Bandolero, The (b)	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Chappell (pianist)	London	1894	B
Bandolero, The (c)	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Chappell (cond)	London	1894	B
Bandolero, The (d)	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Chappell (score)	London	1894	B
Bandolero, The (e)	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Chappell (parts)	London	1894	B
Bandolero, The (f)	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Chappell	London		O
Banjo Song, A	Homer, Sydney	Weeden, H.	Schirmer	New York	1910	I
Barossa Valley Polka, The	"Festival"	"Festival"	mss			B
Beauty's Eyes	Tosti, Paolo	Weatherley, F.E.	Chappell	London		O
Bei dir sind meine Gedanken	Brahms, J.	Halm, F., Morgan, J. (eng)	Simrock	Berlin	8499	G(ii)
Belts	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, R.	PD mss			O
Black Swans	Kimlin, J.	Paterson, Banjo	mss	Fairlight	1956	B
Blamey Boys, The	Dawson, Peter	Mackintosh, D.	PD mss			O
Bless This House	Brahe, May	Taylor, Helen	Boosey	London	1927	G(i)
Blind Ploughman, The	Clarke, Robert C	Radcliffe-Hall, M	Chappell	London	1908	A
Blinde Kuh	Brahms, J.	Kopisch (trans)	Biedermann	Leipzig	1021a	G(ii)
Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind Shakespeare Songs, Three, 3.	Quilter, Roger	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1905	L
Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind	Sargeant, J	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	H537	A

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Blue Bird of Happiness	Harmati, Sandor	Heyman, Edward	Chappell (PD mss)	London	1938	B
Blue Bonnets Over the Border (a) Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p51)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Blue Bonnets Over the Border (b)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Scott, Sir Walter	PD mss			A
Blue Bonnets Over the Border (c)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Scott, Sir Walter	PD mss			A
Blue Dandenongs, The	Widburn, M. H.	Widburn, M. H.	mss			O
Blue Dragoons, The	Russell, Kennedy	Weatherley, F. E.	Chappell	London		O
Blue Peter	Arlen, Albert	Stair, Joyce Owen	Chappell (mss)	Sydney	1957	B
Bonnie wee thing	'anonymous'	Burns	PD mss			I
Bonny Earl of Moray, The	Lawson, M. (arr)	MacLeod (ed)	Cramer, J.B.	London		A
Boots (a)	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, Rudyard	PD mss			F
Boots (b)	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, Rudyard	Chappell	London	1928	B
Boots (c)	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, Rudyard	cond score & parts			B
Boots (d)	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, Rudyard	orchestral parts			F
Boots (e) on the back of Strong Go On, The (b)	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, Rudyard				K
Border Ballad	Cowan, Frederich	Scott, Sir Walter	Boosey	London	1895	A
Botschaft	Brahms, J.	Daumer	Simrock	Berlin	9151	G(ii)
Bright is the Ring of Words (Songs of Travel - Part 1)	Vaughan Williams, R.	Stevenson, R. L.	Boosey	London	1905	K
Brittany	Farrar, Ernest B.	Lucas, E. V.	PD mss			A
Broken Vow, A	McCall, J. Petter	Russell, Arthur	PD mss		1924	O
Brothers of the Empire	Thayer, Pat	Hellmore, W.	PD mss			B
Bush Night-Song (a) Australian Bush Songs, Six: 5	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922	K

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Bush Night-Song (b) Australian Bush Songs, Six: 5	James, William	Baylis, Richard	PD mss (Ricordi)	London	1922	K
Bush Silence Australian Bush Songs, Six: 2	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922	K
Bushranger, The	Dawson, Peter	Harrington, E.	Allans	Melb	1940	B
Butterfly, The	Blank, E. (arr)	Quigley, Barbara	mss			O
By My Side	Carey, Freda		mss			B
Call of the Pipes, The	Murray, Alan	Mortimer, C. G.	Chappell	London	1926	A
Caravane, La (a) Op 14	Chausson, Ernest	Gautier, T.	Hamellet	Paris	3024(H)	D
Caravane, La (b)	Chausson, Ernest	Gautier, T.			J6057H	D
Caravane, La (c)	Rabaud, Henri	Népoty, Lucien	Choudens	Paris	AC14.736	D
Caravane, La (d) (Mârout)	Rabaud, Henri	Népoty, Lucien	PD mss			D
Cargoes	Shaw, Martin	Masefield	Cramer	London	1924	A
Caro mio ben	Giordano		Ricordi	London	115334	D
Cells	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, Rudyard	Swan	London	1930	B
Changing of the Guard, The	Flotsam & Jetsam	Flotsam & Jetsam	Colin	Melbourne	1930	O
Chanson de la Touraine	Massenet, J.	Boukay	Heugel	Paris	1912	D
Chant of Bacchus, The (a)	Toms, Denton	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss	London	1914	A
Chant of Bacchus, The (b)	Toms, Denton	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss (parts)	London	1914	B
Chant of Bacchus, The (c)	Toms, Denton	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss (score)	London	1914	B
Chant of Bacchus, The (d)	Toms, Denton	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss		(1939)	B
Chant of Bacchus, The (e) this title: Festal Song/When radiant nymphs around the cluster	McCall, J. Petter	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss			O
Che fiori costume	Legrenzi, G.					D
Chorus, Gentlemen	Löhr, Hermann	Ambient, Mark	Chappell	London	1899	O

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Christ is risen	Rachmaninoff, S.	Newmarch, Rosa	Breitkopf	Berlin		A
Christmas Carol, A	Davidson, M.	Masefield	Rogers	London	1921	A
Cigarette (a)	McCall, J. P.	Wright, Hughe	PD mss		1923	B
Cigarette (b)	McCall, J. P.	Wright, Hugh	PD mss		1923	O
Clancy of the Overflow (a)	Arlen, Albert	Paterson, Banjo	Aschenberg	London	1948	A
Clancy of the Overflow (b)	Arlen, Albert	Paterson, Banjo	Aschenberg	London	1948	B
Clock, The	Loewe, Carl		PD mss		(1943)	B
Clown's Songs, The : 1. O Mistress Mine 2. Come away Death 3. Rain it raineth every day, The (entered under individual titles)	Stanford, C. V.	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1897	A
Cobbler's Song, The (a)	Norton, Frederick		Prowse	London	1916	A
Cobbler's Song, The (b)	Norton, Frederick		PD ms piano			A
Cobbler's Song, The (c)	Norton, Frederick		mss parts			A
Come Again	Dowland, John		PD mss			F
Come away Death see: Clown's Songs	Stanford, C. V.	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1897	A
Come away Death Shakespeare Songs, Three, 1.	Quilter, Roger	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1905	L
Come away Death (a)	Arne, Dr.	Shakespeare	PD mss		1931	A
Come away Death (b)	Arne, Dr.	Shakespeare	PD mss		1926	A
Come on Britain	Gee, Terry	Gee, Terry	mss	London	1956	C
Come You Mary	Craxton, Harold	Gale, Norman	Chappell	London	1914	A
Comrades of Mine Australian Bush Songs, Six: 4	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922	K
Coronach for the Death of Cuthullin	Barratt, Edgar	Boulton, Harold	Elkin	London	1928	A
Could I But Tell My Sorrow	Malashkin	Stewart, G. (eng)	Allan	Melb		A
Coulin, The	'anonymous'	'anonymous'	PD mss			C

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Cowboy Ballads: 1. Rancher's Daughter, The 2. Night Shepherding Song 3. Skew-ball Black, The	Lehmann, L.	Lomax, Prof (ed)	Chappell	London	1912	A
Crabbed Age and Youth (a)	Parry, C. Hubert	Shakespeare	PD mss	London.	n.d	A
Crabbed Age and Youth (b)	Parry, C. Hubert	Shakespeare	PD mss			A
Creation, The	Haydn, Joseph		Novello			end P
Crown of the Year, The	Martin, Easthope	Taylor, Helen	PD mss		1917	E
Cry of the Fighting Forces, The (a)	Keats, Horace	Beck, Catherine	Chappell	Sydney	1944	A
Cry of the Fighting Forces, The (b)	Keats, Horace	Beck, Catherine	Chappell	Sydney	1944	C
Cry of the Wild Goose	Gilkyson, Terry	Gilkyson, Terry	Albert	Sydney	1949	C
Curtain Falls, The	D'Hardelot, Guy	Salmon, A. L.	Chappell	London	1923	C
Danny Deever	Damrosch, Walter	Kipling, Rudyard	Church	New Yk	1897	C
Dark-haired Marie (a)	Lozanne	Lockton, Edward	Prowse	London	1932	C
Dark-haired Marie (b)	Lozanne	Lockton, Edward	orch. mss	London	1954	C
Dawn-Song	Fogg, Eric	Juddaby, W. D.	Elkin	London	1922	C
Deep-Sea Mariner (a)	McCall, J. P.	Barker, Alan	PD mss		1934	O
Deep-Sea Mariner (b)	McCall, J. P.	Barker, Allan	Swan	London	1934	C
Deep-Sea Mariner (c)	McCall, J. P.	Barker, Alan	Swan	London		C
Deep-Sea Mariner (d)	McCall, J. P.	Barker, Alan	Swan (orch. arr. 1.)	London	1934	C
Deep-Sea Mariner (e)	McCall, J. P.	Barker, Alan	Swan (orch. arr. 2.)	London		C
Deil cam' Fiddlin', The Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p102)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Devon Men	Felden, Thomas	Haselden, P. G.	mss		1950	O
Devon, O Devon Songs of the Sea: No. 3	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Devonshire Wedding, A	Phillips, H. Lyall	Phillips, H. Lyall	Chappell	London	1919	O

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Did you hear the nightingale	Kimlin, J.	McEwan, Flor.	mss		1954	G(i)
Dinder Courtship, A	Coates, Eric	Weatherley, F. E	Boosey	London	1912	C
Don Juan's Serenade	Tschaikowsky, P.	Tolstoi/ Newmarch (tr)	Boosey	London	1903	C
Donkey, The	Besley, Maurice	Chesterton, G. K.	Boosey	London	1923	C
Doppelgänger, Der	Schubert, F.	Schmidt, Hayes (eng)	Boosey	London	H4089	N
Down here (It's quiet down here)	Brahe, May	O'Reilly, P. J.	Enoch	London	1915	C
Drake	Henty, Richard	Hewlett, W.	PD mss	London		C
Drake's Call (a)	Keats, Horace	Brandon, H. J.	Chappell	Sydney		C
Drake's Call (b)	Keats, Horace	Brandon, H. J.	orch arr in piano copy			end C
Drake's Drum Songs of the Sea: No. 1	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Dream one more dream	Rizzi, Alba	Rizzi, Alba	Schott	London	1949	D
Dreamboat	McCall, J. P.	Southern Cross	PD mss			I
Dreamer, The (a)	McCall, J. P.	Siddle, T.	PD mss		1928	O
Dreamer, The (b)	McCall, J. P.	Siddle, T	Chappell (signed PD)	London	1941	D
Dreamer, The (c)	McCall, J. P.	Siddle, T.	Chappell	London	1941	C
Dreamer, The (d)	Bird, Evelyn	Siddle, T	PD mss		1938	D
Dreaming of England (a)	Dawson, Peter	Francis, Nancy	mss			D
Dreaming of England (b)	Dawson, Peter	Francis, Nancy	PD mss	Sydney	1941	D
Dreaming of England (c)	Dawson, Peter	Francis, Nancy	PD mss	Sydney	1942	D
Dreaming of England (d)	Dawson, Peter	Francis, Nancy	PD mss			O
Drink to me only	Lehmann, L. (arr)	'anonymous'	Chappell	London		C
Driving a Cobb & Co	Sheldon, Sarah	Sheldon, Sarah	mss			O
Droop not young lover (a)	Handel, G. F.	Hills, W.	Boosey	London	1903	C

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Droop not young lover (b)	Handel, G. F.	Hills, W.	Boosey (singer's copy)	London	1903	C
Droop not young lover (c)	Handel, G. F.	Hills, W	PD mss			D
Drum Major, The (a)	Newton, Ernest	Weatherley, F.E.	Chappell	London	1908	C
Drum Major, The (b)	Newton, Ernest	Weatherley, F. E.	Chappell	London	1908	O
Du bist die Ruh	Schubert, F.	Helkin, R. (eng)	Elkin	London	1909	G(ii)
Du bist so jung (a)	Wolff, Erich J.		PD mss Harmonie	Berlin	1909	G(ii)
Du bist so jung (b)	Wolff, Erich J.		Harmonie	Berlin	1909	G(ii)
East of Suez	Dawson, Peter	Bowden, Harold	PD mss		1941	O
Edward	Loewe, Carl	Scott/Herder (tr)	Peters	Leipzig	8612	C
Elëanore	Coleridge -Taylor, S.	Mackay, Eric	Novello	London	1906	C
Elégie	Massenet, J.	Gallet, Louis	PD mss			D
England	Besley, Maurice	Oldershaw, Irene	Boosey	London	1933	C
England All the Way (a)	Longstaffe, Ernest	Lochton, Edward	Chappell	London	1936	C
England All the Way (b)	Longstaffe, Ernest	Lochton, Edward	mss			C
Eri tu	Verdi, G.					D
Erlking	Schubert, F.	Goethe/Hayes(tr)	Peters	Leipzig	H4089	C
Fairy Lough, The	Stanford, C. V.	O'Neill, Moira	Boosey	London	1901	C
Fairy Town, A (St. Andrews)	Parry, C. Hubert	Coleridge, M. E.	Novello	London		D
Farmer's Pride	Russell, Kennedy	Russell, Kennedy	Chappell	London	1909	C
Feldeinsamkeit	Brahms, J.		Lengnick	London	9195	G(ii)
Fiddler of Kildare, The	Gleeson, Horace	Tainsh, William	Chappell	Sydney		C
Fischermädchen, Das	Schubert, F.				S5769A	G(ii)
Flag that will never be furled, The	Dawson, Peter	Harrington, E.	PD mss			O
Floral Dance, The	Moss, Katie	Moss, Katie	Chappell	London	1911	E
Follow me 'ome	Ward-Higgs, W.	Kipling, Rudyard	Sheard	London	1906	C

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Forever and a Day	Kern, Jerome	Hammerstein	PD mss			D
Forsake Me Never	Tschaikowsky, P.		PD mss	Sydney	1943	A
"French Chanson": 1. Promenade à mule 2. Vision Fugitive 3. Manoir de Rosemonde, Le 4. Panurge 5. Psyche 6. Marins d'Islande 7. Caravane, La (Marouf)	'misc. French' Fourdrain, Felix Massenet, J. Du Parc, Henri Massenet, J. Paladilhe, E. Fourdrain, Felix Rabaud, Henri		("French" folder)			D
"French Songs": under titles	'misc. French'		brown folder			D
Fret-Foot (a)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	Prowse	London	1938	D
Fret-Foot (b)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	'Piano'			D
Fret-Foot (c)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis				D
Fret-Foot (d)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis				D
Fret-Foot (e)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	a cover			D
Fret-Foot (f)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	orch parts			D
Friend For Me	McCall, J. Petter	Weatherly, F. E.	Boosey	London	1920	end D
Fussreise	Wolf, H.	Mörike, von Bose, (eng)	Peters	Leipzig	9053	G(ii)
Gae bring tae me (a)	Wilson, John	Burns, Robert				E
Gae bring tae me (b)	'anonymous'	Burns	PD mss			I
Gala Water Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p67)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Garden of Allah, The	Marshall, Charles	Weatherley, F. E	Boosey	London	1908	F
Gate of the Years, The (a)	Palmer, Peggy S.	Haskins, Louise	Chappell	London	1940	B
Gate of the Years, The (b)	Palmer, Peggy S.	Haskins, Louise	PD mss	London		B
Gentleman Jim	Oliver, Herbert	Parr, Harry A.	mss		1947	F
Gesú Bambino (a)	Yon, Pietro A.	Martens, F. (eng)	Fischer	Birm.		A

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Gesú Bambino (b)	Yon, Pietro A.	Martens, F. (eng)	Prowse	London		F
Gesú Bambino (c)	Yon, Pietro A.	Martens, F. (eng)				F
Gesú Bambino (d)	Yon, Pietro A.	Martens, F. (eng)	PD mss			F
Gesú Bambino (e)	Yon, Pietro A.	Martens, F. (eng)	orch parts			L
Ghazals of Hafiz, Five Prelude: Hafiz improvises i. Alayá: send the cup around ii. Oh, glory of full-mooned ... iii. Sáki! dye the cup's rim ... iv. Sufi, hither gaze v. New Moon's Silver Sickle	Bantock, G.	Arnold, Sir E. (tr)	Breitkopf	Leipzig	1905	C
Give Me Freedom	Ford, Alan	Ford, Alan	mss	Kauri	1949	E
Glorious Devon	German, Edward	Boulton, Harold	Boosey	London	1905	E
Glory of the Sea, The	Sanderson, W.	Weatherley, F. E.	Boosey	London	1916	F
Go fetch me a pint of wine Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p26)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
God Bless Australia Fair	McCall, J. P.		PD mss		1952	end A
God Save the Queen	Carey, Henry	Carey, Henry			1743	E
Gratitude	Smith, Wynne	Smith, Wynne	Begg	NZ	1946	E
Green grow the rushes O	'anonymous'	Burns	PD mss			I
Green Hills of Somerset, The	Coates, Eric	Weatherley, F. E.	PD mss		1917	E
Grey Shades of Cobb & Co	McCall, J. P.	Carroll, Laura P.	PD mss	Sydney	1940	E
Gunga Din	Sampson, George	Kipling, R.	mss		1946	O
Hail Immortal Bacchus	Arne, Dr.		PD mss			E
Harfenspieler I	Schubert, F.	Goethe, Nicholls (eng)	Augener	London		G(ii)
Hark, hark the lark	Schubert, F.	Shakspeare (sic)	Augener	London	5288	G(ii)
Hear Me! Ye Winds and Waves!	Handel, G. F.	Marzials (trans)	Boosey	London	1895	F
Hear Ye Israel	Mendelssohn, F.		Boosey	London	C111	I

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Heart I Ask, The	Bach, J. S.		PD mss (?)			A
Heart o' the Romany Rye (a)	McCall, J. P.	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss		1923	O
Heart o' the Romany Rye (b)	Webber, Charles	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss		1938	O
Heart o' the Romany Rye (c)	Webber, Charles	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss		1939	F
Heart o' the Romany Rye (d)	Webber, Charles		PD mss			F
Heart o' the Romany Rye (e)	Weber, Charles	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss		1938	O
Heart o' the Romany Rye (f)	Weber, Charles	Molloy, J. C.	PD mss (parts)			E
heure exquise, l' (a) from: Chanson Grisès	Hahn, Reynaldo	Verlaine	Heugel	Paris	8241	A
heure exquise, l' (b) from: Chanson Grisès	Hahn, Reynaldo	Verlaine	Heugel	Paris	8241	D
Hey, Ho, The Wind and the Rain	Walthew, R. H.	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1898	F
Hiawatha's Vision	Taylor, S. C.	Longfellow, H.	PD mss		1951	E
High Wycombe Market	Cochran, L. T.	Adcock, A. St J.	mss		1948	O
Hoki, Hoki tonu Mai	McCall, J. Petter (arr)					A
Holy City, The (a)	Adams, Stephen	Weatherley, F. E.	Boosey	London	1892	F
Holy City, The (b)	Adams, Stephan	Weatherley, F. E.	orchestral parts			E
Homeward Bound Songs of the Sea: No. 4	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Honour and Arms	Handel, G. F.		Augener	London	13062	F
Hope the Hermit (a)	Oxenford (arr)	Oxenford (arr)	Chappell	London	1933	F
Hope the Hermit (b)	Oxenford (arr)	Oxenford (arr)	Chappell (mss)	Sydney		F
Hope the Hermit (c)	M.W. (arr)	Oxenford	Chappell	London	1933	O
Hope the Hornblower	Ireland, J.	Newbolt, H.	Boosey	London	1911	F

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House by the Side of the Road, The (a)	Rizzi, Alba	Foss, Sam W.	Prowse	London	1948	E
House by the Side of the Road, The (b)	Rizzi, Alba	Foss, Sam W.				E
House by the Side of the Road, The (c)	Rizzi, Alba	Foss, Sam W.	orchestral score			E
House by the Side of the Road, The (d)	Rizzi, Alba	Foss, Sam W.	PD mss			P
House of Mine	Stewart, D. M.	Stevenson, R. L.	Augener	London	1933	F
How's My Boy (a)	Homer, Sydney	Dobell, Sydney	Schirmer	New York	1906	F
How's My Boy (b)	Homer, Sydney	Dobell, Sydney	PD mss			E
Hurrah! for the Highlands Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p24)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
I am a man	Dawson, Peter		PD mss			I
I heard a forest praying (a)	de Rose, Peter	Lewis, Sam	Chappell	Sydney	1937	P
I heard a forest praying (b)	de Rose, Peter	Lewis, Sam				P
I heard a forest praying (c)	de Rose, Peter	Lewis, Sam				P
I heard a forest praying (d)	de Rose, Peter	Lewis, Sam				P
I heard a forest praying (e)	de Rose, Peter	Lewis, Sam M.	Chappell	Sydney	1937	F
I saw that you were grown so high	Purcell, H.		PD mss			F
I See a Tree	Hodges, Michael	Hodges, Michael	PD mss			F
I travel the Road, who cares (a)	Thayer, Pat	Parsons, D.	Chappell	London	1927	P
I travel the Road, who cares (b)	Thayer, Pat	Parsons, D.				P
I'll sail upon the dog star	Purcell, H.		PD mss			F
I'll Walk Beside you	'not noted by PD'		Chappell	London		N
I'm Wait, Wait, Waiting	Robinson, S. K.	Robinson, S. K.	mss		1954	O
If ever I Meet the Sergeant	Bennett, Sterndale	Wright, H. E.	Boosey	London	1928	F

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If music be the food of love (a)	Travers, Alison	Shakespeare	PD mss Boosey	London	1930	P
If music be the food of love (b)	Travers, Alison	Shakespeare	PD mss			P
Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer	Brahms, J.	Ling, H, Morgan J. (eng)	Lengnick	Berlin	12504	G(ii)
In Memorium of Daniel Dawson Dect 31st 03	Dawson, Peter		PD mss			P
In Memory of You	Dawson, Peter	Bowden, Harold	Chappell	Sydney	1941	P
In Prison	Harrison, Julius	Morris, William	Enoch	London	1921	F
In Summertime on Bredon	Peel, Graham	Housman, A. E.	Chappell	London	1911	K
In Summertime on Bredon (a)	Somervell, A.	Housman, A. E.	Boosey	London	H4525	K
In Summertime on Bredon (b)	Somervell, A.	Housman, A. E.	PD mss		1927	K
Indian Love Lyrics, Four: i. Temple Bells, The ii. Less than the dust iii. Kashmiri Love Song iv. Till I Wake (entered under individual titles)	Woodforde- Finden, Amy					F
Invictus	Huhn, Bruno	Henry, William				P
Is My Team Ploughing	Butterworth, G.	Housman, A. E.	Augener PD mss	London		F
Isobel (a)	Bridge, Frank	Goddard- Fenwick			1919	E
Isobel (b)	Bridge, Frank	Goddard- Fenwick	PD mss			F
It was a song you sang me	Lohr, Hermann	Roberts, M.				F
"Italian": 1. Caro mio ben 2. Che fiero Costume 3. Eru tu	'misc. Italian' Giordano Legrenzi, G. Verdi, G.		("French" folder)			D

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J'ai dit aux étoiles	Paladilhe, E	Grenier, E	Heugel	Paris	5037	D
Jerusalem (a)	Parry, C. Hubert	Blake				G(i)
Jerusalem (b)	Parry, C. Hubert	Blake	Curwen	London	1916	G(i)
Jolly Old Ne'er Do Well	Gleeson, Horace	Bevan, W. A.	mss		1951	G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (a)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar, Mungo	Swan	London	1936	G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (b)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar. Mungo				G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (c)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar. Mungo				G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (d)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar. Mungo				G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (e)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar. Mungo	PD mss			G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (f)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar. Mungo	orch parts			G(i)
Jolly Roger, The (g)	McCall, J. P.	Dewar. Mungo	typed words			G(i)
Journey, The	Cochran, L. T.	Adcock, A. St J.	mss		1948	O
Jug of Punch, The	Wood, Chas. (arr)	Graves, A. P.	Boosey	London	1897	G(i)
Kangaroo and Dingo	German, Edward	Kipling, R.			11754	G(i)
Kashmiri Love Song see: Indian Love Lyrics, Four (iii)	Woodforde- Finden, Amy	Hope, Laurance	Boosey	London	1903	F
Kashmiri Song	Woodforde- Finden, Amy	Hope, Laurance	Boosey	London	1903	G(i)
Kerry Dance, The	Molloy, J. L.	Molloy, J. L.	Boosey	London		G(i)
King Billy's Song Australian Bush Songs, Six: 3	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922	K
Knight of Bethlehem, The	Thomson, D. C.	Maughan, H. N.	Novello	New York	1921	G(i)
Kyrie Eleison	Kimlin, J.	51st Psalm	mss		1954	G(i)
Ladies, The	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, R.	PD mss			O
Laird o' Cockpen, The (a)	Nairne, Lady		P & S		84	G(i)
Laird o' Cockpen, The (b)	Nairne, Lady	Weatherley, F. E.	PD mss			end E
Lake Isle of Innisfree, The	Herbert, Muriel	Yeats, W. B.	Elkin	London	1928	G(i)
Lament of Shah Jehan, The	Ronald, Landon	Malcolm, Ian	PD mss Enoch	London		O

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Land o' Mine	Dawson, Peter	Farrell, A. E.	Allan	Melb	1941	G(i)
Land o' the Leal Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p98)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Land of the Sundown	Mason, Iris	Saunders, Hal	mss (Davis)		1942	G(i)
Land of "Who Knows Where" ... Australian Bush Songs, Six: 1	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922	K
Largo al Factotum (a) (also titled: Hey! For the Factotum)	Rossini, G.	Aveling, C. (Eng)	Ricordi			E
Largo al Factotum (b)	Rossini, G.		orch parts			end G(i)
Lasseter's Last Ride (a)	McCall, J. P.	Harrington, E.	PD mss			G(i)
Lasseter's Last Ride (b)	McCall, J. P.	Harrington, E.	PD mss			G(i)
Lasseter's Last Ride (c)	McCall, J. P.	Harrington, E.	PD mss		1950	G(i)
Last Revel, The	Harrison, Julius	old chinese	Enoch	London	1921	F
Legion of the Lost, The	Thayer, Pat	Lee, Bert	Frances			G(i)
Less than the dust see: Indian Love Lyrics, Four (ii)	Woodforde- Finden, Amy	Hope, Laurance	Boosey	London	1903	F
Life's Greatest Joy (a) (The Gift of Life)	McCall, J. P.	Rudkins, Henry	PD mss	London	1925	G(ii)
Life's Greatest Joy (b)	McCall, J. P.	Rudkins, Henry	PD mss			G(ii)
Life's Greatest Joy (c) titled: Peace	Dawson, Peter	Rudkins, Henry	PD mss			O
Life's Winter	Dawson, Peter		PD mss			G(ii)
Lights Out	Gurney, Ivor	Thomas, Edward	Stainer	London	1926	G(i)
Lilliburlero (Calling us all)	Alford, K. J. (arr)	Stanley, A.	Hawkes	London	1942	G(i)
Little Admiral, The	Stanford, C. V.		PD mss		1915	G(i)
Little Grey Home in the West	Löhr, Hermann	Eardley-Wilmot	Chappell	London	1911	G(ii)
Little Prayer I Love (a)	Rizzi, Alba	Conyers, Max	PD mss (Chappell)			G(i)
Little Prayer I Love (b)	Rizzi, Alba	Conyers, Max	BBC manus.			G(i)

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Lochnagar Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p19)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Long Ago in Alcala	Messenger, André	Weatherley, F. E. and Ross, A.	Chappell	London		O
Lord is my shepherd, The (a)	Bantock, G	Psalm XXIII	Chappell	London	1942	G(i)
Lord is my shepherd, The (b)	Bantock, G.	Psalm XXIII	Chappell	London	1942	G(ii)
Lord is my shepherd, The (c)	Bantock, G.	Psalm XXIII	PD mss (Chappell)		1953	G(ii)
Lord Rendel	Sharp, Cecil (arr)	Eng. folk songs	Schott	London	3036	G(i)
Lord's Prayer, The	Malotte, A. H.		Schirmer	New York	1935	G(i)
Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrée	Capel, J. M.	Kingsley, C.	Chappell	London	1898	O
Love is a Bable	Parry, C. Hubert	'anonymous'	Novello	London	1903	G(i)
Love Song of Renaldo	Fain, Sammy	Kahal, Irving	PD mss (Albert)	Sydney	1943	G(ii)
Love Triumphant	Wheeler, Alfred	St. John	Allan	Melb	1935	G(i)
Love's Philosophy	Quilter, Roger	Shelley	Boosey	London	1905	G(i)
Love, Could I Only Tell Thee	Capel, J. M.	Bingham, C.	Chappell	London	31625	O
Loveliest of Trees	Butterworth, G.	Housman, A. E.	PD mss		1927	G(i)
Loveliest of Trees the Cherry Now	Somervell, A.	Housman, A. E.	Boosey	London	1904	G(i)
Lovely Kind and Kindly Loving (a)	Holst, Gustav	Breton, Nicholas	Chappell	London	1923	G(i)
Lovely Kind and Kindly Loving (b)	Holst, Gustav	Breton, Nicholas	PD mss			G(i)
Lovely Tree, A	Gleeson, Horace	Beven, W. A.	mss			end G(ii)
Low Backed Car, The	Lover, Samuel		PD mss			I
Lowland Sea, The	Arnold, W. F.	Barron, Francis	Feldman	London	1919	G(i)
Macgregor's Gathering, The Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p86)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Mainacht	Brahms, J.	Hölty	Peters	Leipzig	2648	G(ii)
Mallee Root, The	Harry, Edith	Souter, Charles	Paling	Sydney	1932	I
Man in the Street (a)	Longstaffe, Ernest	Lockton, E.	Aschenberg	London	1934	I

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Man in the Street (b)	Longstaffe, Ernest	Lockton, E.	PD mss			I
Man who brings the sunshine, The (a)	Cooper, Edward	Cooper, Edward	Chappell	London	1928	H
Man who brings the sunshine, The (b)	Cooper, Edward	Cooper, Edward				H
Man who brings the sunshine, The (c)	Cooper, Edward	Cooper, Edward				H
Mandalay	Cobb, Gerard F.	Kipling, R.	Sheard	London		I
Mandalay	Willeby, Charles	Kipling, R.	Church	Ph'delphia	1909	I
Manoir de Rosemonde, Le	Du Parc, Henri	Bonnieres, R. da	Lerolle & Rouart	Paris	AR 743	D
Many a mile away	Pinsuti, Ciro	Mark-Lemon, M	Morley	London	1325	I
March of the Cameron Men (a) Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p96)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
March of the Cameron Men (b)	Campbell, Mary	Campbell, Mary	P&S 84			H
March of the Cameron Men (c)	Patterson, A. (ed)		PD mss			A
March, Ettrich and Teviotdale Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p51)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Marienlied	Marx, Joseph		PD mss			G(ii)
Marins d'Islande	Fourdrain, Felix	Alexandre, A.	PD mss			D
Marri'd	Harrison, A.	Gilmore, Mary	PD mss		1949	I

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Maud: a song cycle 1. I hate the dreadful hollow 2. Voice by the Cedar Tree, A 3. She came to the village church 4. O let the solid ground 5. Birds in the high wall garden 6. Go not happy day 7. I have led her home 8. Come into the garden Maud 9. fault was mine, The 10. Dead, long dead 11. O that 'twere possible 12. My life has crept so long	Somervell, A.	Tennyson, A.	Boosey	London	1898	C
McPherson's Farewell (a)	McCall, J. P.	Burns, R.	Swan	London	1933	H
McPherson's Farewell (b)	McCall, J. P.	Burns, R.				H
McPherson's Farewell (c)	McCall, J. P.	Burns, R.	orch parts			end H
Men of Australia	Dawson, Peter	Dawson, Peter	PD words			L
Menin Gate, The	Bowen, Lauri	Haydn, Eric	Boosey	London	1930	H
Miner, The	Sutton, Kent	Oxenford, E.	PD mss			L
Mistletoe, The	Robinson, S. K.	Robinson, S. K.	mss		1954	O
Money O!	Head, Michael	Davies, W. H.	Boosey	London	1929	H
Moonlight Fancy	McCall, J. P.	Southern Cross	PD mss			I
Morgen	Strauss, R.		Universal	Vienna	5444c	G(ii)
Morgentau (a)	Wolf, H.		Peters	Leipzig	9471	G(ii)
Morgentau (b)	Wolf, H.		PD mss		1924	G(ii)
Morning Praise	Strang, Sydney	Strang, Sydney	mss			O
Most Precious Most Sweet of All	Robinson, S. K.	Robinson, S. K.	mss		1954	O
Mountains of Mourne, The	French, Percy		PD mss			I
My Ain Wee House	Munro, D. R.	Wilson, Mrs.	Asherwood	London	JB2369	H

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My boy Tammie Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p100)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
My Friend	McCall, J. P.	Weatherly, F. E.	Boosey	London	H10129	I
My Hee'lan' Fancy	Grant, Hector	Grant, Hector	PD mss			O
My Ladies Bower	Temple, Hope	Weatherly, F.				I
My Love Song to a Tree (a)	Walters, O. W.	Saunders, Hal	Prowse; part PD mss	London	6935	I
My Love Song to a Tree (b)	Walters, O. W.	Saunders, Hal	PD mss			F
My Love Song to a Tree (c)	Walters, O. W.	Saunders, Hal	PD mss		1950	H
My Menagerie	Foster, Fay	Elder, Mrs.	Fisher	New York	1917	H
My Mine of Memories (a)	McCall/Kimlin	Davies, Leslie J.	mss		1957	I
My Mine of Memories (b)	McCall/Kimlin	Davies, Leslie J.	PD mss		1958	I
My Mine of Memories (c)	McCall/Kimlin	Davies, Leslie J.	PD mss			I
My Mine of Memories (d)	McCall/Kimlin	Davies, Leslie J.	PD mss			I
Myself when young	Lehmann, L.	Khayyám, Omar	Metzler	London	1896	H
Nachtgesang	Strauss, R.	Bernhoff (eng)	Universal	Vienna	3456	G(ii)
National Hymn	Kimlin, J.	Welsh, Alec	mss			O
Nazareth	Gounoud, C.	Porte. A. Chorley, H (eng)	Schott	London	605	H
Ned Kelly	McCall, J. P.		PD mss		1933	I
Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen	Brahms, J.	Daumer			2648	G(ii)
No Answer	Stewart, D. M.	Tennyson, A.	Augener	London	1920	H
Nocturne	Franck, Cesar	Fourcaud, L de	Enoch	Paris		D
None but the lonely heart (a)	Tschaikowsky, P.	Goethe, Clutsam (eng)	Murdoch	London	145	H
None but the lonely heart (b)	Tschaikowsky, P.	Goethe, Westbrook (eng)	PD mss			I
Nun wandre Maria (a)	Wolf, H.	Heyse & Geibel	Heckel	Mannheim	2957	G(ii)
Nun wandre Maria (b)	Wolf, H.	Heyse & Geibel	PD mss			G(ii)

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Nut-brown Ale (a)	Murray, Alan	Booth, William	Chappell	London	1944	H
Nut-brown Ale (b)	Murray, Alan	Booth, William				H
O liebliche Wangen (a)	Brahms, J.					G(ii)
O liebliche Wangen (b)	Brahms, J.		PD mss			G(ii)
O Mistress Mine see: Clown's Songs	Stanford, C. V.	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1897	A
O Mistress Mine Shakespeare Songs, Three, 2.	Quilter, Roger	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1905	L
O Ruddier than the cherry (air) (a) I rage, I melt, I burn (recit)	Handel, G. F.		PD mss + Cramer	London	JBC7528	P
O Ruddier than the cherry (air) (b)	Handel, G. F.		orch parts			I
O that it were so	Bridge, Frank	Landor, W. S.	Chappell	London	1913	H
O, my love is like a red, red rose	'anonymous'	Burns	PD mss			I
Of Course I Love You	Robinson, S. K.	Robinson, S. K.	mss		1954	O
Old Brigade, The	Barri, Odoardo	Weatherly, F. E.	Reynolds	London	662a	I
Old Cockatoorali, The	Saunder, Hal	Saunder, Hal	Davis	Sydney	1942	H
Old England	Meehan, P.V.	Meehan, P.V	PD mss			O
Old Father Thames	O'Hogan, Betsy	Wallace, R.	Wright	London	1933	I
Old Flagged Path, The (a) from: Little White Mouse, The	Arundale, Claude	Kelly, Ethel	Cramer	London	1912	G(ii)
Old Flagged Path, The (b)	Arundel, Claude	Kelly, Ethel	Cramer	London	1912	H
Old Garden, An (a)	Temple, Hope	Burnside, Helen	Boosey	London		A
Old Garden, An (b)	Temple, Hope	Burnside, Helen	Boosey	London		B
Old Garden, An (c)	Temple, Hope	Burnside, Helen	Boosey	London		H
Old Garden, An (d)	Temple, Hope	Burnside, Helen				H
Old Kettledrum (a)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	Boosey	London	1937	I
Old Kettledrum (b)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	Boosey	London	1937	I
Old Kettledrum (c)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	full score			I
Old Kettledrum (d)	McCall, J. P.	Barron, Francis	orch parts			I

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Old Soldier, The (a)	Hutchinson, V. H.	de la Mare, W.	Oxford			H
Old Soldier, The (b)	Hutchinson, V. H.	de la Mare, W.	PD mss		1933	H
Old Stockman Remembers, The	Kimlin, J.	Horne, C. E.	mss			O
Old Superb, The Songs of the Sea: No. 5	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Old-Time Dance, An	Robinson, S. K.	Robinson, S. K.	mss		1954	O
Onaway, Awake, Beloved	Cowen, F. H.	Longfellow	Metzler Allan	London Melbourne	1892	H
On the Brow of Richmond Hill	Purcell, H.	Durfey, T.				J
On the Idle Hill of Summer (a)	Ainsworth, R.	Housman, A. E.	Boosey	London	1932	H
On the Idle Hill of Summer (b)	Ainsworth, R.	Housman, A. E.	PD mss			H
On the Road to Mandalay	Speaks, Oley	Kipling, R.	Boosey	London	1935	I
Once I loved a Maiden Fair	MacFarren, G. A.	Oxenford, J.	Chappell	London	13626	H
Only a Tramp	Smith, Wynne	Smith, Wynne	mss			H
Operatic Album: Baritone: Eri tu Wie Todesahnung Deh vieni a la finestra Pescator, affonda l'essa Quand'ero paggio Largo al factotum	'misc. opera' Verdi, G. Wagner, R. Mozart, W. A. Ponchielli, Verdi, G. Rossini, G.		Ricordi	London	110414	D
Orpheus with his lute	Vaughan- Williams, R.	Shakespeare	PD mss		1929	K
Our Star	Dawson, Peter	Baxter, Harry	Chappell	Sydney	1941	end I
Our Wish for You	Strang, Sydney	Strang, Sydney	mss			O
Outward Bound Songs of the Sea: No. 2	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Pauper's Drive, The	'not noted by PD'		PD mss			J
Phil the Fluter's Ball	French, W. P.	French, W. P.	Prowse	London	1937	J

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Pibroch, The	Stanford, C. V.	Maclean, M.	Enoch	London	1919	J
Pirate, The	Smith, Wynne	Smith, Wynne	Maurice (mss)			J
Port O' Sydney (a)	Brash, James	Tainsh, W. A.	Chappell	London		O
Port O' Sydney (b)	Brash, James	Tainsh, W. A.	Chappell	Sydney	1922	J
Port O' Sydney (c)	Brash, James	Tainsh, W. A.				J
Port of Sleep, The	Ord-Hamilton, J.	O'Reilly, P. J.	M	London	1921	J
Portsmouth Road, The (a)	Mayell, Billy	Howard, Ralph	Prowse	London		J
Portsmouth Road, The (b)	Mayell, Billy	Howard, Ralph	words only (Prowse)			K
Prentice Lads o' Cheap, The	McCall, J. P.	Barron, F.	Aschenberg	London	1938	J
Pride of Tipperary, The	Lochhead, A.	Lochhead, A.	PD mss (Paterson)	London	1925	J
Prologue from <i>Pagliacci</i> (a)	Leoncavallo, R.	Weatherly (eng)	Ashdown	London	1893	J
Prologue from <i>Pagliacci</i> (b)	Leoncavallo, R.		PD mss			J
Promenade à mule	Fourdrain, Felix	Alexandre, A.	PD mss			D
Psyche	Paladilhe, E.	Corneille, Pierre	PD mss			D
Queen of My Heart	Cellier, Alfred	Stephenson, B.	Chappell	London		O
Raid, The	Kimlin, J.	Wheeler, John	mss			O
Rain it raineth every day, The see: Clown's Songs	Stanford, C V.	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1897	A
Rain or Shine	Strang, Sydney	Strang, Sydney	mss			O
Rann of Exile	Bax, Arnold	Colm, Pdraig	Murdoch	London	1922	J
Recruit, The	Ainsworth, R.	Housman, A. E.	Boosey	London	1932	J
Remember (a)	McCall, J. P.	Toohey, M.	PD mss			J
Remember (b)	Dawson, Peter	Toohey, M.	PD mss			O
Resting	'not noted by PD'		mss (Prowse)	London		J
Ringers, The	Löhr, Hermann	Weatherly, F. E.	Chappell	London	1910	J

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Roads Beside the Sea, The	Keats, Horace	Brandon, H. J.	PD mss		1949	J
Roadside Fire, The (Songs of Travel - Part 1)	Vaughan Williams, R.	Stevenson, R. L.	Boosey	London	1905	K
Rolling Down to Rio	German, Edward	Kipling, R.	Novello	London	1904	J
Rose of My Heart	Löhr, Hermann	Eardley-Wilmot	Chappell	London	1911	O
Roses of Picardy	Wood, Haydn	Weatherly, F. E.	Chappell	London	1914	J
Route Marchin'	McCall, J. P.	Kipling, R.	Swan	London	1930	end J
Rover's Way, The	Norton-Wilson	Montgomery, M.	mss		1954	O
Sands O' Dee, The	Clay, Frederick	Kingsley, C.	Weeks	London		K
Scots Wha Hae (a)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Burns, R.	P&S 84			K
Scots Wha Hae (b)	'not noted by PD'	Burns	PD mss			K
Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83): (songs identified entered under titles)	'misc. Scottish' Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Sea Gypsy, The	Head, Michael	Hovey, Richard	Boosey	London		K
Sea Memories	Britten, David	Britten, David	mss		1949	O
Sea Winds	Harrison, Julius	Askew, Paul	Rogers/ Boosey	London	1939	K
Sergeant of the Line, A	Squire, W.H.	Weatherley, F. E.	Boosey	London	1908	K
Sei mir gegrüßt (a)	Schubert, F.		Schlesinger	Berlin	S5759A	G(ii)
Sei mir gegrüßt (b)	Schubert, F.		PD mss		1924	G(ii)
Seminarian, The	Moussorgsky, M.	Taylor, D. (eng)	Schirmer	New York	1917	K
Serenade (sung by Juan)	Blank, E. (arr)	Quigley, Barbara	mss		1955	O
Shakespeare Songs, Three: 1. Come away Death 2. O Mistress Mine 3. Blow Blow thou Winter Wind (entered under individual titles)	Quilter, Roger	Shakespeare	Boosey	London	1905	L
She alone charmeth my sadness (a)	Gounoud, C.	Farnie, H. (eng)	Cramer	London	1909	K
She alone charmeth my sadness (b)	Gounoud, C.		Boosey	London	H4401	K

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She moved through the fair	Hughes, H. (arr)	Colun, Padraic	PD mss			K
Sherwood	Dear, James	Noyes, Alfred	Stainer	London	1910	K
Shipmates o' Mine (a)	Sanderson, W.	Teschemacher, E.	Boosey	London	1913	K
Shipmates o' Mine (b)	Sanderson, W.	Teschemacher, E.	Boosey	London	1913	K
Shipmates o' Mine (c)	Sanderson, W.	Teschemacher, E.				K
Ships of Yule	Shaw, Marin	Field, Eugene	Cramer	London	1923	K
Silent Worship	Handel, G. F.		PD mss			K
Silver	Armstrong-Gibbs	de la Mare, W.	PD mss		1929	K
Simon the Cellarer	Hatton, J. L.	Bellamy, W. H.	PD mss		1917	E
Simple Things	Collier, C. M.	Young, John	mss			end B
Sincerely (My Friend)	Clarke, Emilie	Clarke, Emilie	Cramer	London	1903	K
Smuggler's Song, A (a)	Mortimer, C. G.	Kipling, R.	Swan	London	1914	K
Smuggler's Song, A (b)	Mortimer, C. G.	Kipling, R.	orch parts			K
Smuggler's Song, A (c)	Mortimer, C. G.	Kipling, R.	words only			K
Snowbird (a)	Thayer, Pat	Siever, Bruce	mss			K
Snowbird (b)	Thayer, Pat	Siever, Bruce	mss			K
Snowbird (c)	Thayer, Pat	Sevier, Bruce	PD mss			L
Snowbird (d)	Thayer, Pat		parts			E
Snowbird (e)	Thayer, Pat		PD mss			P
Soldier's Life, A	'not noted by PD'	Burleigh, W. S.	mss			K
Soldiers of the Queen, The	Stuart, Leslie	Stuart, Leslie	Albert	Sydney	1914	E
Song of a Sailor (see also: Song of the Wooden-legged Fiddler)	Peal, Graham	Noyes, Alfred	PD mss			K
Song of Australia	Kurrajong	Kurrajong	mss			K
Song of Australia, The (i)	Kennedy, M.	Kennedy, M.	mss			O
Song of Australia, The (ii)	Dawson, Peter		PD mss			K
Song of Good Cheer, A	Strang, Sydney	Strang, Sydney	mss			O
Song of Salty Sam, The (a)	McCall, J. P.	McCall, J. P.	PD mss		1937	K

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Song of Salty Sam, The (b)	Dawson, Peter	Dawson, Peter	PD mss			O
Song of Solomon, The	Kimlin, J.	Old Testament	mss		1954	end O
Song of the Drum (a)	Andrews, W. B./ McCall, J. P. (arr)	Andrews, W. B. (written & adapted)	PD mss for Swan	London	1933	O
Song of the Drum (b)	McCall, J. P.	Andrews, W. B.	Swan	London	1933	C
Song of the Flea, The	Moussorgsky, M.	Goethe	PD mss (Breitkopf)			K
Song of the Grateful Heart, The (a)	Ord-Hamilton, J	Ord-Hamilton, J	Macmelodies (mss)	London		K
Song of the Grateful Heart, The (b)	Ord-Hamilton, J	Ord-Hamilton, J				K
Song of the Highway	'not noted by PD'		orch parts			F
Song of the Old Boundary Rider (a)	Kimlin, J.	Palmer, Vance	mss			G(i)
Song of the Old Boundary Rider (b)	Kimlin, J.	Palmer, Vance	mss		1957	G(i)
Song of the River, The	Taylor, Joyce	Taylor, Joyce	mss and words	NZ	1944	K
Song of the Road (a)	Munday, Gilbert	Mellor, Len	mss			K
Song of the Road (b)	Munday, Gilbert	Mellor, Len	PD mss		1939	O
Song of the Thames (a)	Murray, Alan	Mortimer, C.	Chappell	London	1935	K
Song of the Thames (b)	Murray, Alan	Mortimer, C.	Chappell	London	193	K
Song of the Thames (c)	Murray, Alan	Mortimer, C.				K
Song of the Thames (d)	Murray, Alan	Mortimer, C.				K
Song of the Wanderer	Hay, Valerie	Hay, Valerie	PD mss (Reed)			K
Song of the Wooden-legged Fiddler (see also: Song of a Sailor)	Peal, Graham	Noyes, Alfred	Chappell	London	1910	K

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Songs of the Sea: with chorus (a) No. 1 Drake's Drum No. 2 Outward Bound No. 3 Devon, O Devon No. 4. ^{zz:} unidentified No. 5 Old Superb, The (entered under individual titles)	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Songs of the Sea: with chorus (b) No. 1 Drake's Drum No. 2 Outward Bound No. 3 Devon, O Devon No. 4 ^{zz:} unidentified No. 5 Old Superb, The	Stanford, C. V.	Newbolt, Henry	Boosey	London	1904	K
Songs of Travel - Part 1: Vagabond, The Bright is the Ring of Words Roadside Fire, The (entered under individual titles)	Vaughan Williams, R.	Stevenson, R. L.	Boosey	London	1905	K
Sonnet XVIII (Shall I compare thee to a summer's day)	Aikin, W. A.	Skakespeare	Stainer	London		K
Sonntag	Brahms, J.	Aveling, C. (eng)	Augener	London		K
Sons of the Sea	Colerige-Taylor, S. McCall, J. P. (arr)	Naidu, Sarosini	PD mss		1927	K
Sons of the Southern Cross	Dawson, Peter	Heath, Elizabeth	PD mss		1940	K
Soul of a Ship, The (a)	Flint, Arnold	Bolton, Harold	PD mss		1939	O
Soul of a Ship, The (b)	Flint, Arnold	Bolton, Harold	PD mss		1939	O
Speak Music (a)	Elgar, Edward	Benson, A. C.	Boosey	London	1902	K
Speak Music (b)	Elgar, Edward		words only			K
Spirit Flower, A	Tipton, Campbell	Stanton, Martin	PD mss			K
Spirit of Britain, The	McCall, J. P.	'anonymous'	PD mss			K

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Spirit of England, The (a)	Dawson, Peter	Bowden, Harald	PD mss			K
Spirit of England, The (b)	Dawson, Peter		orch parts			F
Spring's Singing	MacFadyen		PD mss		1924	K
Standard on the Braes o' Mar (a) Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p82)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Ferrie (ed)				D
Standard on the Braes o' Mar (b)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Laing, A.	P&S 84			K
Ständchen	Brahms, J.	Kugler, F				G(ii)
Star of Eve	Wagner, R.	England, P. (eng)	Boosey	London	H4401	K
Star of God	Coates, Eric	Weatherley, F. E.	Chappell	London	1942	K
Stock-Rider's Song, The Australian Bush Songs, Six: 6	James, William	Baylis, Richard	Ricordi	London	1922	K
Story of the Sparrows, The (a)	Green, Phillip	Newell, N.	Boosey	London	1950	K
Story of the Sparrows, The (b)	Green, Phillip	Newell, N.				K
Story of the Sparrows, The (c)	Green, Phillip	Newell, N.	mss			K
Strong Go On, The (a)	Thayer, Pat	Siever, Bruce	Boosey	London	1935	K
Strong Go On, The (b)	Thayer, Pat	Siever, Bruce	mss			K
Such Lovely Things	North, Michael	Ege, Henrik	Boosey	NewYork	1949	K
Sun and Song	Dawson, Peter	Bingham, C.	Elkin	London	1904	K
Sundowner' Song	Collier, C. M. (arr)	Young, John	mss			end K
Sylvia	Speaks, Oley	Scollard. C.	PD mss (Rogers)			K
Take, O Take	Parry, C. Hubert	Shakespeare	PD mss		1928	K
Tam i' th' Kirk	Barclay, Marion	Jacob, Violet	Chappell	London	1926	L
Tang of the Sea, The	Walter, Kenneth	Bolton, Hugo	Harms	New York	1933	L
Taronga Jamboree (Sydney Zoo)	Courtney, May	Courtney, May	mss			L
Temple Bells, The see: Indian Love Lyrics, Four (i)	Woodforde- Finden, Amy	Hope, Laurance	Boosey	London	1903	F
There	Parry, C. Hubert	Coleridge, Mary	PD mss		1928	L
There is a flower that bloometh	Wallace, Vincent	Fitzball	PD mss		1917	E

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There is a lady sweet and kind	'not noted by PD'		PD mss			O
There is no death	O'Hara, Gordon	Johnstone, G.	Chappell	London	1920	L
There's Something at the Yardarm	Gleeson, Horace	Brady, E. J.	Chappell	London		L
Think on Me	Scott, Lady John	Scott, Lady John	PD mss			L
Thinkin' of Things	Orphie, Elsie	Butcher, Ernest	mss			L
Thou Most High (Air); Ah, shall not this great day (Recit)	Bach, J. S.	Prout, E. (ed)	PD mss (?)			A
Thou'rt Passing Hence, (Highland Message, The)	Sullivan, Arthur	Hemans, Mrs.	Chappell	London	20763	L
Thou, oh Lord, art my shepherd, "Andante"	Tschaikowsky, P.		PD mss		1943	L
Three Jolly Bottles	McCall, J. P.	McCall, J. P.	PD mss			L
Three Souls, The (a)	McCall, J. P.	Butcher, Ernest	Chappell	London	1937	L
Three Souls, The (b)	McCall, J. P.	Butcher, Ernest				L
Three Souls, The (c)	McCall, J. P.	Butcher, Ernst	full score			L
Three Souls, The (d)	McCall, J. P.	Butcher, Ernest	full score			end L
Till I Wake see: Indian Love Lyrics, Four (iv)	Woodforde- Finden, Amy	Hope, Laurance	Boosey	London	1903	F
time for making songs has come, The	Roger, James	Hagedorn, H.	Ditson	New York	1916	L
Tis but a week	Bridge, Frank	Gould, Gerald	Rogers	London	1919	L
Tis I	Pinsuti, Ciro	Lablanche, F.	Cramer	London	7069	L
To Anthea (a)	Hatten, J. L.	Herrick	Boosey	London	H4089	L
To Anthea (b)	Hatten, J. L.	Herrick	Aschenberg	London	JB 2281	L
To Greet the Queen	Ball, Nancy	Ball, Nancy	mss		1954	O
To the Forest (a)	Tschaikowsky, P.	Whishaw, F. J.	Boosey	London		L
To the Forest (b)	Tschaikowsky, P.		PD mss			L
To the Forest (c)	Tschaikowsky, P.		PD mss			L
To the singing hearts	Kimlin, J.	Dames, Helen	mss			G(i)

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Tod, daß ist die kühle Nacht, Der	Brahms, J.	Heine	Simrock	Berlin	8628	G(ii)
Tommy Lad!	Margetson, E. J.	Teschemacher, E	Boosey	London	1907	L
ton doux regard (<i>Lakmé</i>)	Delibes, Léo	Gondinet & Gille	Heugel	Paris	5699	D
Toreador Song	Bizet, George		PD mss			L
Tramping thro' the Countryside (a)	Allison, Peter	Barker, Allen				L
Tramping thro' the Countryside (b)	Allison, Peter	Barker, Allen	orch parts Chappell	London	1934	L
Trankadillo	Molloy, J. L.	Weatherley, F. E.	Chappell	London	1895	O
Traum durch die Dämmerung	Strauss, R.	B... , John (eng)	Universal	Vienna	1912	G(ii)
Traveller, The	Godard, B.				DS4024	L
Travellers all of ev'ry station (a) (Siege of Rochelle, The)	Balfe, M. W.	Fitzball, Edward	PD mss		1927	O
Travellers all of ev'ry station (b)	Balfe, M. W./ revised & edited Dawson, Peter	Fitzball, Edward	Ashdown	London	1927	L
Travellers all of ev'ry station (c)	Balfe, M. W./ Dawson, Peter	Fitzball, Edward	Ashdown	London	1927	M
Travellers all of ev'ry station (d)	Balfe, M. W./ Dawson, Peter	Fitzball, Edward	full score			M
Travellers all of ev'ry station (e)	Balfe, M. W./ Dawson, Peter	Fitzball, Edward	orch parts			M
Travellers all of ev'ry station (f)	Balfe, M. W./ Dawson, Peter	Fitzball, Edward	orch parts			end M
Trees	Rasbach, Oscar	Kilmer, Joyce	Chappell	Sydney	1922	L
Trumpeter, The (a)	Dix, J. Airlie	Barron, J. F.	Boosey	London	1904	L
Trumpeter, The (b)	Dix, J. Airlie	Barron, J. F.				L
Turn Ye To Me, XXXII	Lawson, M. (arr)	Wilson, John				L
Two Grenadiers, The	Schumann, R.	Heine, England, P. (eng)	Boosey	London	H4089 (1899)	L

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Über Nacht (a)	Wolf, H.	Sturn, Julius	Bote & Bock	Berlin	17188	G(ii)
Über Nacht (b)	Wolf, H.		Enoch	London	1927	G(ii)
Under the Greenwood Tree (i)	Arne, Dr.	Shakespeare				L
Under the Greenwood Tree (ii)	Castelnuovo -Tedesco, M.	Shakespeare	PD mss		1928	L
Up from Somerset (a)	Sanderson, W.	Weatherly, F. E.	Boosey	London		L
Up from Somerset (b)	Sanderson, W.	Weatherly, F. E.	Boosey	London	1913	M
V for Victory	Dawson, Peter	Dawson, Peter	Chappell	Sydney	1941	L
V the Sign of Liberty	Smallwood, H.	Smallwood, H.	mss			O
Vagabond, The (Songs of Travel - Part 1)	Vaughan Williams, R.	Stevenson, R. L.	Boosey	London	1905	K
Vanity Fair	Bantock, G.	Bunyan, John	Swan	London	3004	L
Verborgenheit	Wolf, H.	Mörike, Boileau, M. (eng)	Peters	Leipzig	8958	G(ii)
Verschwiegene Liebe	Wolf, H.		Peters	Leipzig	9516	G(ii)
Veteran's Song, The	Adams, Stephan	Weatherly, F. E.	Boosey	London	1902	L
Village Blacksmith, The	Weiss, W. H.	Longfellow, H.	Chappell	London		O
Vision Fugitive (a)	Massenet, J.					D
Vision Fugitive (b)	Massenet, J.	Gremont/ Milliet	Heugel	Paris	71104	D
Vision Fugitive (c)	Massenet, J.		PD mss			D
Von ewiger Liebe	Brahms, J.	Wentzig	Peters	Leipzig	2648	G(ii)
Von waldbekränzter Höhe	Brahms, J.	Daumer	Peters	Leipzig	2648	G(ii)
Vulcan's Song	Gounoud, C.	Oxenford (eng)			M5257	L
Wadding' o' Lachie McGraw, The	'not noted by PD'		PD mss			N
Waiata Maori	Hill, Alfred	McIndoe, John	McIndoe	Dunedin		N
Waiata Poi	Hill, Alfred	Hill, Alfred	Chappell	Sydney	1908	N
Walk Down the Road	Thayer, Pat	Sievier, Bruce	PD mss Boosey	London		N

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Wanderer, Der (a)	Schubert, F.	Schmidt, Hayes (eng)	Boosey	London	H4089	N
Wanderer, Der (b)	Schubert, F.	Schmidt, Hayes, M. (eng)	Boosey		H4401	G(ii)
Wandering Player, The	Brandon, Herbert	Murray, Alan	PD mss Patersons	New York	136	N
Wandering the King's Highway (a)	Coward, Leslie	Coward, Leslie	Chappell	London	1935	N
Wandering the King's Highway (b)	Coward, Leslie	Coward, Leslie				N
Wandering the King's Highway (c)	Coward, Leslie	Coward, Leslie	words only			N
Wanderthirst	Fordell, Jean	Gould, Gerald	Elkin	London	1933	N
Waratah and the Wattle, The (a)	McCall, J. P.	Lawson, Henry	PD mss			N
Waratah and the Wattle, The (b)	McCall, J. P./ McCall, J. P. (arr)	Lawson, Henry	Chappell	Sydney	1954	N
Waratah and the Wattle, The (c)	McCall, J. P.	Lawson, Henry				N
Waratah and the Wattle, The (d)	McCall, J. P.	Lawson, Henry				N
Way Down the South Coast Road	McDonald, E. C.	McDonald, E. C.	mss			N
We'll Pray For You (a)	Morrow, Dorothe	Freer, David	Chappell	Sydney	1953	N
We'll Pray For You (b)	Morrow, Dorothe	Freer, David	Chappell	Sydney	1953	N
Westward Ho! (a) (Pirate Goes West, The)	McCall, J. P.	Moore, L.	Swan	London	1933	N
Westward Ho! (b) (Pirate Goes West, The)	McCall, J. P.	Moore, L.	Swan	London	1933	N
Westward Ho! (c)	McCall, J. P.	Moore, L.	Chappell	London	1933	N
Westward Ho! (d)	McCall, J. P.	Moore, L.	Chappell	London	1933	N
Westward Ho! (e)	McCall, J. P.		PD mss score & orch parts (Swan)	London	1933	L
Westward Ho! (f)	McCall, J. P.	Moore, L.	orch parts			end F
Whalin' Up the Lachlan (a)	Dawson, Peter	Essen, Louis	Allan	Melbourne	1940	N

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NFSA, MS5030 Sheet Music Folio packages A-P
song title - alphabetical

Whalin' up the Lachlan (b)	Dawson, Peter	Essen, Louis				N
Whalin' up the Lachlan (c)	Dawson, Peter	Essen, Louis				N
What Does It Cost	Taylor, Joyce	Taylor, Joyce	mss			O
When icicles hang by the Wall	Keel, Frederick	Shakespeare	Cramer	London		N
When Swallows Homeward Fly	White, Maude	from a German folk song	Chappell	London	1898	N
When Valiant Ammon (a)	Battishill, J. Foster, M. B. (arr)		Boosey	London	1896	N
When Valiant Ammon (b)	Battishill, J.		orch parts			N
Where e'er you walk	Handel, G. F.		PD mss		1949	N
Who is Sylvia?	Schubert, F.	Shakespeare	Augener	London	5287	N
Why the Man in the Moon is Laughing	'not noted by PD'	Bolton. Hugo	words only			L
Wie bist du meine Königin	Brahms, J.	Daumer	Peters	Leipzig	2648	G(ii)
Wild Colonial Boy, The	'anonymous'		Allan	Melbourne	1950	I
Wind that shakes the barley, The	Hughes, H. (arr)		PD mss			F
With my Shillelagh under my arm	O'Brian, Billy & Wallace, R.	O'Brian, Billy & Wallace, R.	Chappell	Sydney		N
Wollondilly, River of My Dreams	Rossell, Hilma	Rossell, Hilma	mss			N
Wood Magic	Shaw, Martin	Buchan, John	Cramer	London	1924	N
Ye Twice Ten Hundred Deities (a)	Purcell, H.		Augener	London		N
Ye Twice Ten Hundred Deities (b)	Purcell, H.		score & parts			N
Year that's awa', The (a) Scottish Songs (Ferrie's 83, p105)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Dunlop, John				D
Year that's awa', The (b)	Patterson, A. (ed)	Dunlop, John	PD mss			end N
Yeomen of England, The	German, Edward	Hood, Basil	Chappell	London	1902	N
Yon assassins (a) (Pari siamo)	Verdi, G.		PD mss			J

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NFSA, MS5030 Sheet Music Folio packages A-P
song title - alphabetical

Yon assassins (b) (Pari siamo)	Verdi, G.		orch parts			J
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Young Tom O' Devon (b)	Russell, Kennedy	Simpson, H.	Chappell	London	1909	O
Your Voice Beloved	Jeffries, Stanton	Edgar, Percy	Aschenberg	London	1949	N
Zueignung	Strauss, R.	B..., J. (eng)	Universal	Vienna	5463c	G(ii)
zz: unidentified	'not noted by PD'		mss			E
zz: unidentified mss	Dawson, Peter		PD mss			P

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 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
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- BBC (1950) 08.11: 1st & 2nd Programme 'Fifty Years of Song'. Caversham:
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- BBC (1950) 08.14: Freddy Grisewood, presenter 'Fifty Years of Song'.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1950) 08.16: contract 1st programme 'Fifty Years of Song' pre-
recorded 22.8.50. Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1950) 08.21: contract 3rd, 4th, 5th programme 'Fifty Years of Song'.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1950) 08.30: 9th Programme 'Fifty Years of Song'. Caversham: BBC
 Written Archives
- BBC (1950) 08.30: dates programmes 6, 7, 8 'Fifty Years of Song'.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1950) 08.31: 10th Programme 'Fifty Years of Song'. Caversham: BBC
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- BBC (1950) 08.31: dates 9th, 10th programmes 'Fifty Years of Song'.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1950) 08.31: 'Fifty Years of Song' 10th programme. Caversham: BBC
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3.4.10.50. Caversham: BBC Written Archives
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- BBC (1953) 04.30: pencil budget possible Peter Dawson return series.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 05.04: costing of previous Peter Dawson series (ii).
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 05.04: costing previous Peter Dawson series (iii). Caversham:
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- BBC (1953) 05.06: discussion about Peter Dawson return series.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 05.21: orchestra & conductor for Peter Dawson return.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 05.29: size of orchestra if Peter Dawson returns. Caversham:
 BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 06.11: no movement on Peter Dawson return. Caversham:
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- BBC (1953) 08.21: Fielding that possibility of Peter Dawson return
uncertain. Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 09.11: from Fielding that Peter Dawson not coming.
 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1953) 09.18: Peter Dawson not coming to England. Caversham: BBC
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- BBC (1954) 09.29: Fielding [agent] offering Peter Dawson. Caversham:
 BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1954) 10.06: letter to Harold Fielding assuring interest in Peter
Dawson. Caversham: BBC Written Archives
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 Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1955) 02.17: re Peter Dawson accident 25.1.55. Caversham: BBC
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- BBC (1955) 03.10: contract Talks, General Overseas Service. Caversham:
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Caversham: BBC Written Archives
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Scena'. Caversham: BBC Written Archives
- BBC (1955) 05.10: contract 'These Radio Times'. Caversham: BBC Written
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- BBC (1955) 08.13: 'These Radio Times' 10.5.55 cancelled. Caversham: BBC
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- BBC (1955) 08.15: contract 'These Radio Times'. Caversham: BBC
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- BBC (1971) 12.09: Peter Dawson posthumous. Caversham: BBC Written
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Australian Archives/ABC
Peter Dawson 1938-1969

SP 368/1, 7/18/2, Box 4;
SP1011/2, Box 27, Job 10946/96, 303/6/3/33

date			description
1936	06	15	Dawson agent to ABC [in 1938 file]
1938	06	17a	Dawson to Ernest Lashmar of Chappells: first contact re proposed 1939 tour
1938	06	17b	James to Moses: response to initial Dawson letter
1938	08	08	Lashmar to Moses: re Dawson
1938	08	09	Moses instructs Controller Celebrity Concerts to contact Lashmar
1938	08	24	Controller of Celebrity Concerts to Moses: letter for approval and signature
1938	08	31	Moses to Dawson: offer
1938	09	02	amended letter Controller Celebrity Concerts to Moses
1938	11	23	James, Artists Tour Committee to Moses: recommend that D arrive in Aust early in March
1938	11	26	Moses of recommends tour to Concert Committee
1938	12	06	cable to Dawson: if able commence tour second week march
1938	12	06	Moses authorises engagement
1938	12	07	Dawson cable: can commence tour second week may
1938	12	08	Moses cable to Dawson: 1939 tour must begin second week march otherwise impossible
1938	12	10	draft letter to Dawson confirming fee & begin March
1938	12	12	Dawson cable: can arrive Sydney March sixteen by Mooltan
1939	01	04	Dawson cable: itinerary impossible
1939	01	06	Dawson to Moses: made other commitments
1939	01	10	ABC cable: Lashmar advises your Australian tour cancelled
1939	01	18	City of Grafton complain that not on proposed Dawson itinerary
1939	01	20c	Moses reply to Dawson: We regret you ...
1939	01	21	Dawson to Moses: was disturbed to learn that my letter lost [received 1939, 02. 06]
1939	01	25	Barry phoned Lashmar
1939	01	26	Barry to Moses: suggest we advise arrangements for 1940, 1941 in hand
1939	02	11	letter to Dawson begins: again express regret but no 1940
1939	03	02	<i>Radio Call: Why Dawson is not coming</i>
1939	04	03	Moses response to Editor of <i>Radio Call</i> : contradicts
1939	05	02	Moses to Barmby: no offers for broadcasts by Dawson
1939	05	29	<i>Herald</i> : Dawson prefers <i>Tum-Tiddle-Um</i> Songs

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1939	05	31	<i>Wireless Weekly</i> : Dawson signed up by 2UE - sponsor cigarette manufacturer
1939	06	00	newspaper: Favourite song composer? J. P. McCall.
1939	06	03	<i>Radio Times</i> : 3 month season from 2UE
1939	06	03	<i>Weekly Times, Herald</i> 1939, 06.01, <i>Telegraph</i> 1939, 06.01, and about a dozen other papers the same 'smoothing iron' remark
1939	06	04	<i>Radio Times</i> : about GUT tour, runs down radio, runs down TV
1939	06	10	<i>Mail</i> : Dawson won't broadcast for ABC
1939	06	14	<i>Bulletin</i> : Does A stand for Austrian?
1939	06	17	<i>Radio Times</i> : letter to the Editor: <i>Some Cheek</i>
1939	08	25	<i>Courier Mail</i> : Dawson will end career in Brisbane
1939	09	28	Kirke, Manager for ABC NSW: Dawson available
1939	10	11	Moses to Kirke: no interest in any proposal to engage Dawson
1940	03	01	Barry to Moses: Programming Committee recommends using Dawson
1940	03	05ff	Moses agrees. ABC offer. Dawson counteroffer. Dawson first broadcast on Empire Day 24 May 1940. newspaper: ABC announces 10 Dawson broadcasts
1940	05	24	newspaper: Dawson, Nash, Natzke sign contracts with ABC
1940	05	28	2nd Patriotic War Rally Sydney Town Hall
1940	06	15	Cinémode Theatre seeks ABC permission to use Dawson or Harold Williams for fund-raising concert
1940	06	16	newspaper: Dawson to broadcast Thursdays from 20 June 1940
1940	07	24	Maegraith to James: Dawson proposes tours North Queensland, Darwin; WA & SA
1940	07	30	Tour Committee discusses; recommend some broadcasts if he undertakes his tours on own
1940	08	08	to Dawson as 07.30r
1941	07	05	Dawson to James: suggests broadcasts & tour
1941	08	26	recommendation: minimum of 10 engagements over 6 months at 15 guineas
1942	01	07	Dawson to Prime Minister Hon John Curtin MP: position sought in ABC
1942	01	17	Postmaster-General to Bearup (Acting Gen. Manager): any direction in which Mr Dawson's services could be utilised?
1942	02	06	after several drafts reply to Postmaster-General: no possible staff appointment, can only use as artist
1942	03	02	Secretary's typed note to Bearup: Dawson bad manners
1942	03	02	Dawson gets appointment with Bearup for 5th
1942	03	05	Message Barry to Bearup: re Dawson statement that we have offered him a few engagements at 6 guineas.

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1942	03	06a	Barry to Bearup: confirming message
1942	03	06b	Dawson to Bearup hw: suggests tour
1942	04	02a	Bearup to Dawson: ABC sticking to 15 guineas
1942	04	02b	Barry to Bearup do not consider Dawson of greater value to us than three named artists at 15 g.
1942	04	22	Bearup to Kirke: approval 6 weekly recitals commencing 20 May at 15 g
1942	05	06	Kirke to James: Dawson not able to start series before begin July.
1942	05	08	Barry to Bearup: suggest offer a series from a certain date and definite acceptance by return. (initialled Bearup 1942, 05.12)
1942	05	15	<i>New Zealand Listener</i> : dates Liberty Loan concerts
1942	05	29	<i>New Zealand Listener</i> : Wine Women and Song but only one of the second says Dawson
1942	07	11	Dawson to Senator Ashley, PM General: aggrieved at ABC
1942	07	22	Ashley to Dawson: will mention to ABC Chairman
1942	08	03	Bearup to Senator: recapitulation history ABC/Dawson
1943	02	11	Bearup to Ashley: position has not changed since letter of 3 August
1943	04	06a	Approval Dawson 10 week contract with option to extend at 23g per week covering two performances per week
1943	04	06b	James to Dawson: offer
1943	04	07	Dawson to James: agrees
1943	04	09	Barry explains contract to Moses
1943	04	21	Moses advises Commissioners that Dawson has accepted offer.
1943	06	16	Barry to Moses: recommends extension Dawson contract. Recommendation approved.
1943	07	08	to Dawson: new offer - extension begins 28 June - same fees
1943	09	03	Comrades in Arms, dedicated to 19th Battalion
1943	10	15	Manager Victoria to Barry: Dawson refused offer Grand Masonic Lodge Victoria; offer <i>The Victory Show</i> ; <i>Village Glee Club</i>
1943	11	19	Comrades in Arms dedicated to 16th battalion
1944	02	03	from Kirke: Dawson proposed tour Australia
1944	03	06	ABC organises itinerary: 03.06: 3 perfs pw; 03.10: 27 performances
1944	04	05	small halls: Conservatorium Sydney, Albert Hall Brisbane, Assembly Hall Melb.
1944	04	17	Dawson has agreed
1944	05	09	James to Barry: Dawson turns down tour
1944	05	11	Barry to James: difficult to handle this artist.
1944	05	12	Moses advises Commissioners.

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1944	08	07	<i>Daily Mirror: Dawson cancels NZ Loan Tour because relatives killed by robot bombs in England</i>
1945	04	01	<i>Radio Pictorial: Dawson Song Hits of Two Wars, The Big Parade</i> 16 April.
1945	06	06	1945, 06.09: <i>Music of the British Isles</i>
1946	03	21	James to Controller Progs, Lamb: D suggests tour country centres
1946	03	22	Lamb to James: immediate reaction not favourable
1946	03	26	Barry to James: Moses in favour
1946	04	08	Moses approves
1946	04	09	James to Barry: wrote Dawson 27 March - no response
1946	11	00	James' reply to Dawson criticism of ABC rate of fees: ABC employs hundreds of artists. Serious one would have little scope for their talents on commercial stations
1946	11	24	<i>Courier Mail</i> Brisbane + others: Dawson criticises ABC
1946	11	29	several newspapers: Dawson comments on small audience at Grafton, but criticism positive: <i>Dawson memorable Grafton Concert</i>
1947	01	30	Chapple to Controller Progs: agreement reached yesterday Dawson country tour
1947	02	03	Barry to Moses approved
1947	02	04	Lamb foresees difficulties as 22.03. 46
1947	02	06	Moses approves - Dawson tells ABC he is returning to England in July -tour shortened
1947	02	12	publicity: <i>The Bradman of the Baritones</i>
1947	03	19	Lamb: tour shortened to NSW, Q'ld & SA
1947	04	08a	Dawson will leave much earlier - offered studio perfs NSW only
1947	04	08b	ABC SA disappointed as Broken Hill most enthusiastic
1947	04	15	Dawson cannot accept commitments outside of Sydney on account Nan's poor health.
1948	03	19	Dawson leaving for London on <i>Orion</i> July under contract to Fielding - perhaps farewell broadcast?
1948	09	02	Dawson personal letter to Harry Pringle, Variety: details English activities, particularly BBC. Would it be poss for ABC to put the records over? Pringle to Music Sydney: James to Barry supports; Barry asks BBC but not possible for copyright reasons
1948	11	01	Bearup, London, to Moses: Dawson leaving for Australia <i>Orcades</i> 14 December. Interested tour.
1948	11	26	Moses to Bearup: James to arrange something for Dawson.
1948	12	17	Moses to Bearup: possible studio tour Sydney and Melbourne, and 3 each in Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth; public appearances Sydney, Brisbane

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1948	12	20a	complex draft itinerary incl country towns 11 recitals, 8 orchestrals
1948	12	20b	Lamb: has already left London; urgent sign contract.
1948	12	22	ABC cable to Dawson on <i>Orontes</i> : Offer tour
1948	12	30	Bearup to Moses: Dawson had already left - will cable you in Melbourne 10 January
1949	01	01	Moses to Chapple, Manager WA: ascertain decision required urgently Moses to Chapple teleprinter: contact on arrival Fremantle - will forward contract for signature tonight
1949	01	06	Chapple to Moses teleprinter: Dawson not happy fees offered.
1949	01	07	Moses to Dawson: improves offers
1949	01	07a	Dawson to Moses telegram: my terms reasonable no alteration
1949	01	07b	Moses to Dawson: agrees a Dawson interim proposal
1949	01	07c	Chapple to Moses: explanation for Dawson position [arrived later]
1949	01	11	contract sent to Dawson: 22 weeks from 1st week in Feb to 1st week July 1949 - minimum 25 appearances signed Dawson 1949, 01.17
1949	01	12	Variety dates
1949	01	14	draft itinerary No 2 and 3
1949	01	24	publicity: Dawson itinerary tour with Geoffrey Parsons
1949	01	24	publicity: Geoffrey Parsons itinerary tour with Dawson
1949	01	28	James: details studio recital programmes 1949 tour
1949	01	30	press cuttings: Dawson under contract to ABC
1949	02	08	fees Geoffrey Parsons
1949	02	09	James: public recitals
1949	02	11	Shepherd explains Dawson presentation method
1949	02	17	ABC agrees to pick up tab for Dawson excess baggage
1949	02	18	Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation seeks permission for Dawson to talk as J. P. McCall
1949	03	04	re cars: treat Dawson as overseas artist
1949	04	05	Variety programme Melbourne
1949	04	18	details payments to Dawson
1949	06	18	tour financial report; tour attendances & receipts; income & expenditure public recitals & orchestrals
1949	06	16	Courier Mail, Brisbane: <i>Dawson First Lord of the Gramophone</i> ; sub-heading: <i>Croon-happy teenagers, fed on milk-and-water songs flock to his concerts</i>
1950	05	22	Dawson to Moses: returning <i>Orcades</i> 6th November next
1950	06	23	Moses to Dawson: pleased - get into touch shortly to make a specific offer
1950	06	23	Dawson to James: English experiences

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1950	06	28	Dawson to James: arriving Sydney 2nd November - 'Will you please arrange another Australian tour for me'
1950	07	11	James to Dawson: possible studio engagements and orchestrals. pencil note: useful 1951 Jubilee functions
1950	09	25	James drafts offer for Moses; Moses amends, sends. Cable to accept
1950	10	10	Moses cable to Dawson asks for confirmation
1950	10	11	Dawson cable to Moses from <i>Orcades</i> : accepts in part, higher fee, rest to await arrival
1950	10	13	Moses cable to Dawson: agree £50 ... subject your agreeing 3 orchs same figure require immediate finalisation Dawson to Moses: offer orchs unreasonable should require one hundred pounds each plus transport Moses to Dawson: agree £60 orch + £2 trav allow daily also transportation Dawson to Moses: agree terms 17th Oct
1950	11	00c	Variety: Strike up the band; Jim Gussey Presents
1950	11	10	amended itinerary incl. Dec 7 Messiah Adelaide
1950	11	20	<i>Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph</i> : photo Dawson besieged by autograph hunters at Cooper Park.
1950	11	22	publicity 'Interview': why has your voice lasted so well?
1950	11	23	Barry to Moses: additional variety; approved
1950	11	29	<i>Melbourne Age, Argus</i> : perhaps a little less strength than formerly
1950	11	30	James to Moses: Dawson prepared tour April onwards
1950	12	03	publicity: <i>Dawson Back</i>
1950	12	06	fees interstate
1950	12	11	Dawson has declined to appear 21 December; transferred to 31. other detail 5 March
1951	03	04	<i>ABC Weekly: Recruiting Song</i>
1951	04	03	Recital Programme Gosford
1951	04	12	newspaper: Gosford with pianist Clarence Black
1951	04	12	<i>Central Western Daily</i> : warm reception Dawson/Clarence Black Concert
1951	04	30	<u>Boots & Red Cross Hobart:</u> 30 April ABC Adelaide telegram: sing <i>Boots in Moods & Melodies</i> 25 May - 05.01 ABC Sydney wires Dawson in Tasmania - 05.02: Dawson wires Sydney: Boots right Adelaide have Band Parts - among many memos juggling 1951 tour: <i>Red Cross</i> in Tas a surprise but in between so no control
1951	05	01	itinerary & cost details 'services May 12 - June 9 exclusive'
1951	05	12	press: Dawson and Marjorie Lawrence in Jubilee Concert Melb Town Hall

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1951	05	25	press: (Adelaide) both Dawsons in <i>Moods & Melodies</i> .
1951	06	14	proposed tour Draft 1Sept 13 ex Sydney return Syd Oct 26
1951	09	08	<i>The Broadcaster</i> : full page caricature
1951	10	05	income tax to be deducted @ 4/- in £
1951	10	27	publicity: Dawson to replace Father Sydney McEwan
1951	11	07	offer Naval Boxing Tournament Melb Stadium
1951	11	19	Programme Wollongong
1951	11	26	Ararat: programme orch concert with VSO 2nd half
1952	01	18	Barry to Moses: seeks authority Dawson for WA in March
1952	01	31	itinerary tour to WA; 1952, 03.06 Dawson indisposed; 03.11: Dawson bronchitis cancels
1952	09	30	Pringle (Variety): what about using Dawson - heard little lately
1953	02	02	telegram Moses to Dawson: sincerest sympathy, death of Nan 31 January
1953	03	02	Dawson to Chief Accountant: requesting duplicate Group Certificate for y/e 30.06.51; 1953, 03.18 Accountant: no income tax was deducted. Lists gross earnings.
1953	03	13	Pringle to Wiltshire: I hope you have not forgotten Dawson and Harold Williams
1953	05	07	Dawson to Pringle complains bad publicity photograph
1953	05	12	1953.03.23: Dawson for Melb Variety 12, 13 May 1953, 04.07: confirmation to Dawson
1953	05	25	press: <i>Dawson to Live In Melbourne, Coronation Concert</i> Melb Town Hall
1953	06	19	Variety: engagement ABC birthday prog <i>Happy Birthday</i> 1953, 07.02
1953	09	04	<i>Herald</i> , Melb: Dawson biog ends: 'W. James: "Dawson & Melba were Australia's two ambassadors of song. They put this country on the musical map."
1953	09	22	Variety: 1953. 07.17: Melb want him again for <i>Village Glee Club</i> 22 Sept
1953	09	22	photo <i>Village Glee Club</i>
1953	11	30	ABC Weekly: Dawson photographed in Scots beret for St Andrews Day Broadcast
1954	01	08	Variety: <i>Sportsman of the Year</i>
1954	01	08	publicity: Sydney TH 7 ¹⁵ <i>Starlight Variety</i> , 7 ⁴⁵ ABC <i>Sportsman of the Year</i>
1954	02	16	Variety: <i>Canberra Royal Tour Concert</i>
1954	02	23	Variety: <i>Village Glee Club</i>
1954	03	08	<i>Fifty Years of Song</i> : 10 week series beginning 8 March 1954 with Jim Gussey; 5 April postponed because Dawson indisposed; concluded 31 May
1954	03	08	Schedule <i>Fifty Years of Song</i>
1954	03	08	publicity: <i>Fifty Years of Song</i>

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Australian Archives/ABC
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1954	03	27	newspapers: <i>Fifty Years of Song</i>
1954	05	12	<i>Radio Call: Singer 73 weds again</i> 30 April Sydney
1954	07	16	Dawson requesting details of earnings for Tax purposes
1954	08	10	<i>Variety: Village Glee Club</i>
1954	10	19	<i>Variety: Village Glee Club</i>
1955	01	04	<i>Fifty Years of Song</i> repeated each week from 5 Jan 1955
1955	05	19	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> : photo Dawson and Constance
1955	06	16	planning for a new series <i>Dawson Sings Again</i>
1955	12	03	<i>ABC Weekly</i> : new series <i>Dawson Sings Again</i> ; 6 beginning each Sat from 10 Dec
1955	12	03	photo Dawson listening too 'one of his early recording on an old phonograph'
1955	12	10	<i>Dawson sing again</i> : 6 weekly progs beginning 10 December 1955
1955	12	10	publicity: <i>Dawson Sings Again</i>
1956	04	27	beginning negotiations NZBS/ABC to use six recorded programmes <i>Dawson Sings Again</i> ; 1956, 05.29: Agreement signed Dawson and Thomas Tycho
1956	04	30	<i>Adelaide Advertiser: Lykke Memorial Concert Popular</i> ; <i>News: Dawson was sublime</i>
1956	06	16	publicity: <i>Dawson Sings Again</i>
1956	06	26	Dawson ask for details of fees paid all states; 1956, 07.10: reply
1956	12	28	publicity: <i>Friday Bandwaggon</i> with Gussey
1957	01	07	Light Entertainment file: was on <i>Bandwaggon</i> last week
1957	01	26	ABC Television: Dawson appeared on <i>Picture Page</i> with Dame Mary Gilmore.
1957	07	01	25 Years ABC "On this day ..."
1957	11	25	<i>Pictorial Show</i> : Photo Dawson composing
1958	04	16	Light Entertainment file: argument about air-fare to Adelaide
1959	08	03	ABC Drama, Sydney request for Dawson participation in Radio program of reminiscences (NFSA MS5030/8/49)
1959	09	00	Adelaide request for Dawson participation in Radio program of reminiscences as Dawson now in Adelaide (NFSA MS5030/3/51)
1961	05	19	ABC Spoken Archives: Nellie Melba Broadcast, Dawson reminisces
1961	09	27	press cuttings: 'an enthusiastic quaffer of Scotch whisky'
1961	09	28	Moses to Constance Dawson: ABC bereavement letter.
1961	09	29	press cutting: buried Rookwood Cemetery - more than 200 mourners - police escort lead the way
1961	12	01	press cutting: Harold Williams' opening programme tribute to Dawson

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1969	02	04	Sydney: <i>Sun</i> : state of Dawson's grave; Sydney: <i>Morning Herald</i> : neglect; <i>Daily Mail</i> : 1969, 02.18: Dawson Commemorative Shield [sighted December 1996.]
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